

BLITZ

● NOW WE ARE **5** SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

*Who does
Marc Almond
think he is?*

UPTOWN
goes
DOWNTOWN:

BODYMAP
JOHN GALLIANO
RICHMOND-CORNEJO
& MORE

KATHY ACKER ● KATE BUSH ● MATT DILLON
ROBERT SMITH ● EIGHTH WONDER ● SLY 'N' ROBBIE
GEORGE CLINTON ● ZEKE MANYIKA

1980-1985: *the Half Decade Examined*



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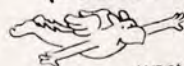
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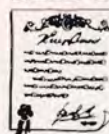
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BLITZ MAGAZINE

1 LOWER JAMES STREET

LONDON W1R 3PN

Tel: (01) 734 8311

ISSN 0263-2543

NEXT ISSUE

OUT SEPTEMBER 26

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Inflation strikes! After two years priced 75p the rising cost of paper has forced us to increase the cover price to 80p. Still, for that extra five pence you also get an additional 32 pages. Now that's what we call value for money!

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colourbox/dante



With an increasingly varied selection of films making it onto videotape now, you wouldn't be blamed for seeing one of the major benefits of a video recorder as providing the opportunity to catch up with all the movies that, for one reason or another, never made it into the cinemas here. Competition for cinema attendances and the high cost of producing multiple physical copies of a film and then promoting it, mean that an increasing number of new releases are shunted off into the cheap and cheerful video market instead. In most cases, it's really a question not of whether a film is good or bad, but what kind of audience-pulling power its star has. A bad Clint Eastwood film will always get released; a good film starring unknowns may not.

Ironically, despite the astonishing worldwide success of *Ghostbusters*, its star Bill Murray is a household name only in the States, largely as a result of the incredibly successful *Saturday Night Live* TV series that also launched John Belushi, Chevy Chase and Eddie Murphy. His 'new' movie, **The Razor's Edge**, actually made before *Ghostbusters* and something of a failure in the States (a sure-fire sign that a film will end up on video), has been deemed unfit for cinema audiences and has been consigned to video-only release by RCA/Columbia.

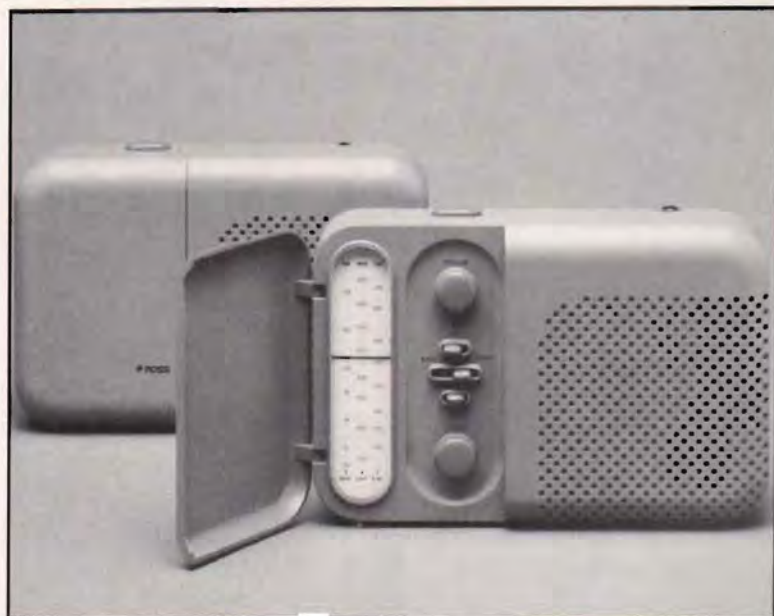
In a lot of ways, though, it's an interesting flop, if only because it reveals the serious side of Bill Murray. Based on Somerset Maugham's novel of the forties, and already

filmed once with Tyrone Power, it's the very serious tale of a man seeking his own path to salvation, a path that causes him, after his experiences in the First World War, to reject his moneyed upbringing, and live a life of poverty in Paris and subsequently India in search of spiritual enlightenment.

For Murray it's a considerable change of style, and one that he appears to believe in quite strongly, despite his self-effacing claims to the contrary. Indeed, Murray agreed to make *Ghostbusters* only on condition that the same Hollywood studio first finance *The Razor's Edge*. Of course the major problem with such a project is that, despite extravagant production values and a fine supporting cast including the wonderful Theresa Russell and Denholm Elliott, Murray has considerable difficulty playing any character other than his usual lovable slob persona. The full dramatic effect of a man's search for spiritual fulfilment is somewhat undermined as a result.

As for any future serious acting, Murray stated just before the film's American release that that would depend on whether the film was a success. "If directors say 'that guy can act a little', then I'll get offered jobs from serious directors. As it is now, I'm in the phone book under K for Komedie." Judging by *The Razor's Edge*'s disastrous performance in the States, and video-only release here, it looks like Bill Murray may stay that way for a while.

Tom Egan



Those awfully clever people at Ross Electronics reckon they've built a better radio and even now are waiting for the world to beat a path to their door. The "simplistically beautiful" £30 radio was designed, by Brand New, on the basis of research which revealed that nine out of ten

pop pickers keep their radios tuned to a single station and only bother fiddling with the on/off switch. Which is why Ross's knobs are on the inside. Don't touch that dial? Can't even find the bloody thing. Tim Kirby

Happy Birthday to us – this time last year we were boasting our biggest ever issue of BLITZ (64 pages) and promising great things in the future. Well this is one of them, our fifth anniversary issue, weighing in at 96 pages, and with more than a third of them in colour.

Five years ago this month BLITZ had its humble beginnings as a quarterly magazine run by two students from a college room and a local payphone. BLITZ grew so rapidly in circulation and reputation, winning the Guardian/NUS Best Graphics Award in 1981, that by the Autumn of 1982 the obvious thing to do was to relaunch the magazine on a professional basis from offices in London. In September 1982 BLITZ became a glossy colour magazine, and went monthly the following April.

In five years, without any financial backing, and with a staff all aged 25 or under, BLITZ has grown into an international magazine reaching more than 60,000 people all over the world. During that time we've built up a team of some of the best young journalists and photographers in the country, and, despite a slight price increase this month, at 80p BLITZ is still better value than any other similar magazine on the market.

Last year we promised you great things in the future. Well we've only just started...

“Fragrance to suit your mood...at the touch of a switch.” According to the Charles of the Ritz group, the future of the fragrance market lies in its being airborne.



As if to prove it, their subsidiary company, Environmental Fragrance Technologies, are about to introduce the patented **Aroma Disc** system, consisting of a 'compact Aroma Disc player diffuser' and a selection of nine Aroma Disc fragrance 'records'. Hard to believe, I know, but absolutely genuine. What you do is insert a scented aroma disc in the 'player', and within a few minutes it will begin to emit clouds of perfumed smoke that will rapidly spread throughout your residence, creating the olfactory illusion that you are living in a very large toilet. At the moment the choice of odours is a little limited, with six 'country blossom perfumes', including 'Imperial Blossoms' ("a complex rich floral bouquet dominated by ylang-ylang and orange flower with a rich jasmine note...") and 'Flowering Woods' ("a beautiful, romantic, innocent fragrance..."), as well as three 'novelty' smells – no, not 'Armpit', 'Burning Rubber', or 'Methane', as you might have hoped, but actually the grotesque 'After Dinner Mints', the smoky 'Fireplace', and the decidedly woody 'Christmas Tree'. The future possibilities for mood enhancement are endless, of course – imagine 'Pepperoni Pizza' ("...for when you're feeling peckish...") or 'Spliff' ("Hard day at work? Why not mellow out with a marijuana aroma disc?"). The Aroma Disc system is in the shops from October 1st, priced £15.95, and the discs cost £2.95 apiece. Me, I'll stick to my Glade air freshener.

Tom Eliot



LUC BESSON

"I told my mother I was leaving to make a movie. She said, 'Oh, that's nice, dear'. So I said, 'No, you don't understand: I'm leaving tomorrow morning to go and make a movie!'"

It wasn't so much the abruptness of this announcement that rocked Luc Besson's mother as his very tender years. Such precocious resolve has proved the undoing of many a callow seventeen-year-old and, indeed, despite six months' diligent canvassing for scripts and backing, Besson was no exception.

Nine years on, however, he is in London to promote his second feature film, *Subway*. His break had eventually come in the modest but significant form of two days' unpaid work on the set of a short film, from which he graduated to roles of considerable diversity and ever-increasing responsibility.

"I just thought it was the only thing I could do. When I went on a shoot for the first time it was really to see if I liked it or not. When I saw, I said 'that's what I want to do'. I didn't know exactly what but I wanted the cinema – it was too marvellous."

Besson's quiet tenacity again proved decisive in securing the finance for his first feature, *The Last Battle*. When every production and distribution company in Paris had declined to commit funds to the project, Besson, with his collaborator Pierre Jolivet, approached private investors for the 3 million francs the film took to make. When five or six such investors actually signed on the dotted line he was, he recalls, "very 'appy".

The outcome of their endeavours was even happier. *The Last Battle* related a bizarre adventure story, chronicling the aftermath of some unexplained catastrophe. This remarkable debut enjoyed only a limited release in England but critical reaction everywhere was unanimously favourable. Many saw the film as a surreal, post-nuclear odyssey, others as something less ambitious, but it was at least a provocative examination of love, life, survival and friendship in a bleak, uncaring environment.

"The public who have seen the film like it. The problem is getting them to see it," he comments, with wry candour, "because it's in black and white with no big stars, a young unknown director, French science fiction..."

Just as the ruined buildings in the Place de la Bourse in Paris suggested the desecrated landscape for *The Last Battle*, so it was a fascination with the labyrinthine murk of the underground that inspired the script for the director's new film, *Subway*.

"I take the subway all the time and I think it's a very impressive world. It's a small world with two parts, one public, one forbidden. I thought it would be interesting to play with this. So I had the idea of the decor and then had a lot of trouble writing a story inside it. After two years I went outside the subway to write the story because it was eating the story all the time and turning it into a documentary. That was the principal problem of the script. But it became special with the subway."



At the start of the film Christopher Lambert (Fred), having kicked the Greystoke habit of walking on all fours, manages to evade his otherwise obdurate pursuers by slipping underground. The reason for his flight is gradually, teasingly, illuminated but arises roughly speaking from a blackmail attempt on Helena (Isabelle Adjani), with whom he is besotted. Besson's camera looks straight past the commuters at a subculture of misfits and delinquents, who take refuge in the subway and who are constantly at

odds with the police.

"For me it's two hours of gratuitous fun," says the director. "I found the first film very hard and afterwards I wanted to make something more relaxed. The subject was very black. It was hard to get it out of my head and the one thing I wanted when it was over was to make a funny film. Now I want to be more serious again. I want more intensity."

● interview by Mark Brennan

S

A

W

Perhaps you should consider the following piece in the nature of a warning. If, in the coming months, you should receive a letter from 'The Video Copyright Trade Authority' asking you for a list of all unauthorised video recordings in your possession with a view to invoicing you for royalties; or a missive from 'Shultz Pet Care Inc.' telling you all about 'Puppi-Stop', the new condom for dogs ("six different sizes, from Chihuahua to Great Dane"); or a communication from 'Foto Sure Developing And Printing Services' which begins "Dear Sir/Madam, With regard to your recent order: We regret that we are unable to print the above film as it contravenes the Obscene Publications Act 1968, etc."; if you

Dear auntie Joan,
My Parents made me
write this. I didnt want to
The Present you gave me
Was Shit I told you what I
wanted but you didn't listen
I hate you
That Piece of dog's
Plo? wasn't worth 50p and
i've broken it already
Don't expect a Kiss
Next time i see you you are
an old fatbag and i hope
You die Soon.

Simon

should receive any of these or a whole host of other similarly unlikely letters, then someone you know has invested in **The Complete Revenge Kit** by Mike Lepine and Mark Leigh (Virgin Books, £5.99). It has to be said that very few of the fake letters in this practical joker's Pandora's Box are likely to hoodwink potential victims for more than a few seconds, but what they lack in authenticity they more than make up for in wit and ingenuity. Possibly my personal favourite is not a letter at all — it's a fairly convincing label to be hung around some poor innocent's empty milk bottle and which reads: "20 EXTRA PINTS PLEASE. And a yoghurt". Now that is just plain evil.

Tim Hulse



ADRIAN PEACOCK

A QUICKIE: If you're looking for the very now hairdo get the severest cut you can, pudding basin Henry IV style. Sweep it all forward, and don't forget the fringe benefits, no matter how short. As a reaction against all those high flyer hairdos, FLAT has become the rage. To achieve the flattest, shiniest head of hair, a tip: GET PLASTERED, without touching a drop. Slap happy young madams have been plastering their heads with NIVEA for these past few months. It softens, it smooths, it secures, it shines...

Iain R. Webb



Is this, at last, the ultimate in personal stereo? A Walkman so compact that all you do is clip it around a standard cassette tape? The future available at Woolworths today? Well, not quite. What this actually is, is a design company's flight of fancy, more of a maybe than a definitely. Asked by design magazine *Creative Review* to rethink a familiar consumer product in order to suggest potential developments of the next ten years, Stephen Green of design consultancy Fether & Partners came up with this Clony Walkman, potentially the last word in miniaturised stereo. But does it work? "No," says Green, "but it could do. This is purely an idea, but with the developments in miniaturisation it's something that will probably happen in the next few years."

Tom Eliot

BLITZ SUBSCRIPTIONS

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GOLD SEAL

PEOPLE



JASON BRATBY

Entering Jason Bratby's top floor flat in leafy Blackheath I was startled to find two young people snogging on the bed. Could this really be what folk had warned me to expect from artists? Was this the beginning, or indeed the tailend, of a coke-induced orgy of sensuality? Alas, no.

"These are just my models, I'm in the middle of a painting." So that was what the easel by the bed was. Things were beginning to make sense.

Jason is young, painterly looking (that's picture painting, not the look of someone who'll pebbledash your house) and used to be a rockabilly. More recently he's done a lot of work for Streetsounds Records, including some of the covers and a huge advertising hoarding in Hammersmith which took him a day to do and which looked suitably impressive.

"My public career started with a lot of action paintings that I used to do at the Albany Empire and the Wag and The Dirtbox and places like that. Then the New York thing came along and I started working with aerosol cans."

From there to the world of commercial design: his first job was a very successful strip cartoon sleeve for a Streetsounds compilation, followed by a number of more 'conventional' graffiti designs. However, he found himself sitting rather uncomfortably alongside his work.

"Not specifically with Streetsounds but with all the graphic design companies that I worked for, I found the business side of the art a bit offputting. I couldn't understand why people only really wanted to talk about what they did the night before and where they got their new shoes from. I wanted to talk about the art form I was involved in, about the colours that were used on the most successful covers and what would make a record cover stand out.

Now he's returned to an interrupted M.A. course at the Royal Academy with renewed vigour and self-confidence. The style is still evolving – the painting illustrated here represents only one aspect of his technique – and despite his assertion that his work is all about "human interaction" a lot of his human subjects appear rather too stiff and formal. Nevertheless, he says that he is finding it easier to work with models and more recent paintings bear this out as well as containing promises of a lively, vivid style. Would he like to unleash his new 'fine art' self on the record sleeve world once more?

"Not unless I have total control over everything I do. It'd be nice to be able to spend days choosing the exact colours and shapes that would make people buy the records but at the moment I think I'm going to be able to achieve more of what I want by sticking to fine art."

He is prepared to take his work abroad if no interest is shown here, but favourable response from various London galleries, and a generally positive buzz, suggests that you'd better hang onto those old Streetsounds record sleeves.





Theresa Russell in *Insignificance* – now read *The Book*

PRINT

A couple of distantly related novelists for your attention first. Terry Wilson's second novel, *'D' Train* (Grapheme, £9.95). If you have any interest in the cut-up technique, you ought to have look at this one. Wilson was responsible for one of the great classics of modern literary journalism (I was going to say parajournalistic literature, but perhaps that would be overdoing it a little). **Here to Go: Planet R-101**, an extended interview with Brion Gysin, the Godfather of Cut-up. **Here to Go**, as it happens, is an excellent pointer for this, a fragmented and hectic journey between identities, a curiously dramatic search for re-unification of a divided self. Jeffrey Archer it isn't. A central device to Wilson's logic is a perception of time travel as a spiritual exercise, and story-telling with cut-ups as a means of exorcising the myth of objectivity.

Graham Swift's preoccupations, as indicated in the brilliant *Waterland*, and now in *Learning to Swim*, his collection of short stories (Picador, £2.50), are strikingly similar, although his methods could hardly be further removed from Wilson's. Swift, for a start, builds protagonists for his stories, and supplies them with personality. He anchors them in more or less familiar history, and then watches them wriggle. His Greek restaurant owner on the Caledonian Road, for example, wrestles with the fictions that he has built around himself and his family over the years, in an all-too-recognisable fashion. But most of his characters realise (or imagine, or fantasise) that they are travellers in time, and that it plays tricks on them. Swift has a nasty habit of leading the reader down seductive garden paths, and then clouting you round the head with an emotional blackjack. You will enjoy this!

Anyway, enough novelists! I know what you people want! Oh yes, I know, deep in your heart of hearts, you want merchandising don't you? Well now, **Insignificance** – *The Book* by Neil Norman and Jon Barraclough (Sidgwick & Jackson, £7.95) is an exemplary piece of middlebrow merchandising for you. As books of films (not books of film criticism) go, it isn't such a bad bargain at that – lotsa

piccies from the movie, Terry Johnson's screenplay in all its glory... but then there's this essay on *The Making of Myth*, whimsical and rather lightweight (the film itself offers a far more thoroughgoing investigation of the making of myth, without even using the word) and a brief historical account about the McCarthy years. This is useful if you didn't know anything about those times, but if that is the case, you'd probably have too much trouble with the film to want a souvenir of it. In the end, **Insignificance** – *The Book* is altogether too forceful an apology for itself, an ambitious project that didn't quite come off (a quality it shares with the film).

More merchandising now. **The Killjoy's Book of the Cinema** – *A Schmovie Goer's Companion* by John H. Irving (Virgin Books, £4.99). This slim volume is essentially a means of marketing the trustiest topic of conversation ever to recur, When Film Buffs Collide. I refer, of course, to continuity gaffes, which are subdivided here to make the book a little more user-friendly. It isn't very hard. Just commission some 'engrave-your-own-wally' illustrations, coin a term – "schmovie" (yech!) – and Lo! A Virgin Book! It's a passable gift for a hospitalized relative.

Bikers by Maz Harris (Faber, £6.95) is something else. An all-too-brief history, geography, sociology, psychology and love poem to the riders of motorbikes. Harris declaims on 'outlaw' subculture from the inside, and I don't mean he does it in tabloid headlines. I'd enjoy the book a lot more if the layout was better – awesome though many of the pictures are, the arrangement is – how shall I put this? – unsympathetic. And it doesn't encourage the casual browser to read the text in any way at all, and that is a great shame.

It only remains for me to finish reviewing **The Minimal Self** by Christopher Lasch, which I started reviewing last month. The review ends as follows: "...and although the first four chapters are depressing as hell, and the last three are more than a little complicated by their very thoroughness, I heartily recommend you check this book out, as it outlines the problems of the postwar period of moral philosophy, and points convincingly to a way out. Read it. Take your time." Have a nice day! Marc Issue

She was intelligent, attractive
and she trusted him.
He was cold, dominant and
he betrayed her.

Now she's going to make
him pay....

TANTALUS

AMANDA HEMINGWAY

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and sophisticated
tale of revenge'

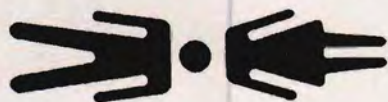
– Daily Mail



£2.50



PEOPLE



JANE SNOWDEN

Later in September you'll know Jane Snowden as Jenny, the lead role in David Puttnam's new film *The Frog Prince*, but just now she's recovering from a period as understudy and attendant/crowd/various in a gaggle of Chichester Festival Theatre productions while the likes of Donald Sinden, Diana Rigg and Edward Fox hogged the limelight and foyer photo space.

In fact, nineteen year-old Jane started at the age of 12, playing the disabled child in a production of *A Day In The Death Of Joe Egg*, before moving onto the slightly lighter *Oliver*. At 16 she joined the National Youth Theatre's training course and ended up playing Juliet at the Jeanetta Cochrane Theatre to wild critical acclaim.

After returning to school to take A-levels, and then another stint down in London, it seemed like Drama School would be the natural progression, so much so that she turned down a place at University. Alas, she got rejected by every single one that she applied for, but was fortunate to have a pushy agent who believed in her. As a result, she secured the role of Mary in *The York Mysteries* playing opposite Simon Ward's Christ.

"I got that really because I'm a York girl, and traditionally it's a play for York people by York people. As a theatrical experience it's quite incredible, it was brilliant to do."

From Mary to Jenny is quite a change of roles and Jane's first real non-classical part. She plays a seventeen year-old English boarding school girl who goes to Paris in 1960 to study French at the Sorbonne and 'finish'. The ensuing tale of love'n'lust in *Gay Paree* is saved from hackneyed tripe by the wit and inventiveness with which most of the actors, notably Jane, invest their parts.

"It's a very British film I think, even though it's set in Paris and has got loads of French actors. Actually I think I would have been far more overawed had there been more big name British people in it. The French ones are all really well-known character actors over there, but here, well, you wouldn't recognise a single one of them."

"It's not got a lot going for it in terms of stars. I mean who's heard of Alexandre Sterling, or Diana Blackburn, or me for that matter?"

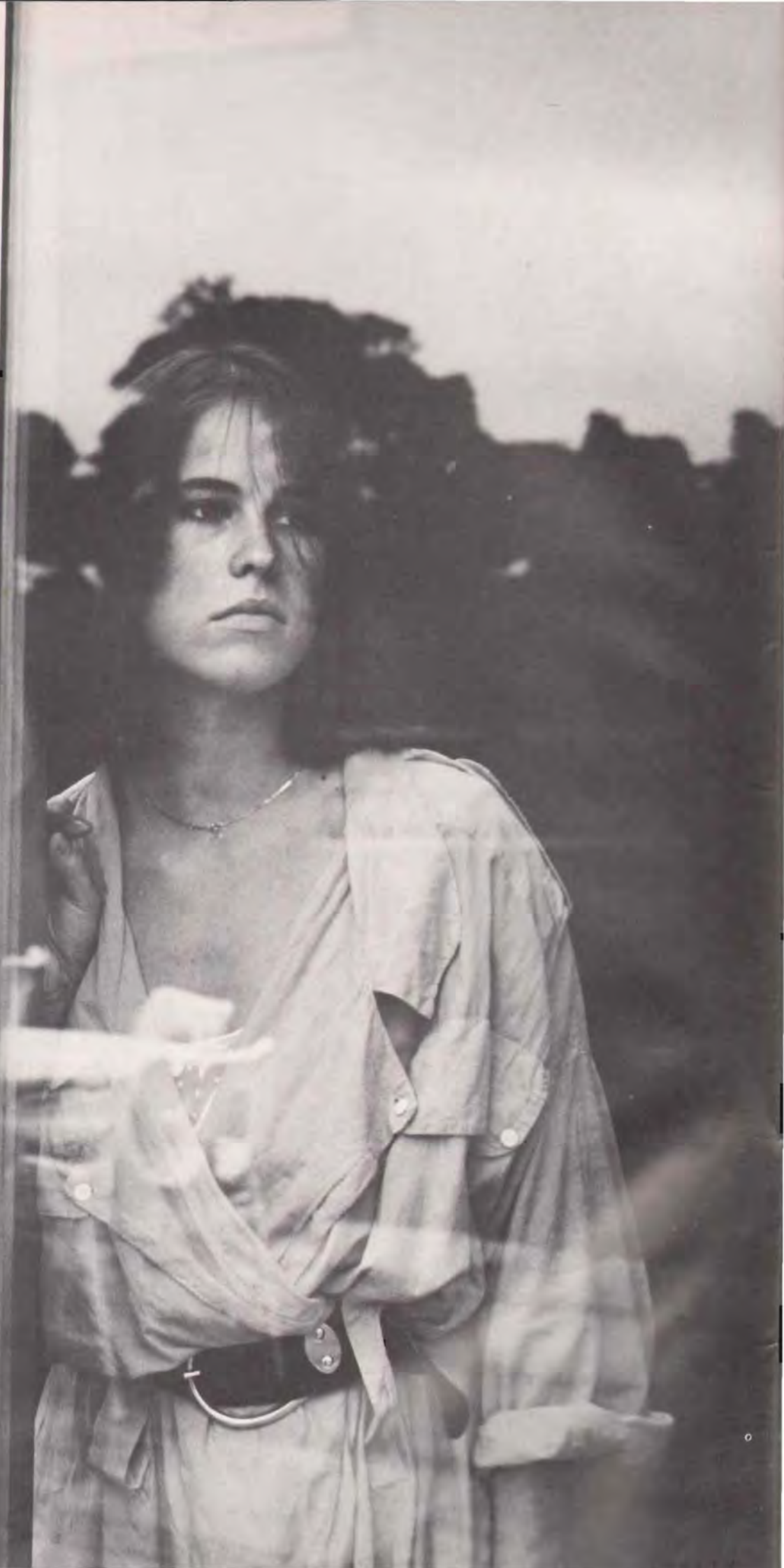
Who are your heroes and heroines?

"I really like Judi Dench. She's a local York girl so I'm biased. Also that woman out of *Witness*, Kelly McGillis. I went to see it last night and it's the best film I've ever seen. It's funny but I was never the slightest bit interested in films until about a year ago, and now I actually go to the cinema and see them without having to be forced!"

Twelfth Night beckons on the theatrical horizon ("a meatier part at last") but after October there are no plans except to go on holiday. Get your scripts in before the rush.

● interview by Paul Mathur

● photograph by Julian Simmonds



YOUR MIND ISN'T THE ONLY THING HEROIN DAMAGES.

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So, if a friend offers you heroin, use your brain while you still can.

And say no.

HEROIN SCREWS YOU UP



SHEILA SMITH I am inclined to write a few words of introduction to you about Sheila Smith—rather more inclined, I must admit, now that I've heard a little more of her music in considered circumstances, and have had the opportunity to meet her. Advance billing didn't do her many favours at all. She was variously described as a 'chanteuse' (I wish that word would get back to its own side of the Channel, I really do) and 'torch singer' (which is even worse!) from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, York or Dalston. Contrary to some reports, she has never been a member of Bronski Beat, although she has performed her own material *within* Bronski Beat concerts on five occasions. Rather less symbolically (for the purposes of the media, at any rate) she took part in Andrew Poppy's ZTT entertainment at the Ambassadors Theatre earlier this year. And she used to be in an all-woman band in York called The Fetish, over which we should possibly draw a veil, or a blank. To coin some well-thumbed music journalists shorthand, she is... Classically Trained!

OK, the music. Four songs have been recorded. I giggled pleasurably through three of them, which is a good sign. *Black Slax* was the first, a likely single and probably an extended musical joke at the expense of the dearly departed Great British Jazz Revival. *Siesta Queen* is loopy, Latin and ludicrous. I've heard other para-pop units attempt this sort of thing, but never quite raise the wherewithal. Sheila tells an excellent musical joke. As she does with something which (on the tape I have) is called *The Gospel One* (I'm sure there will be a better title for it, sooner or later). Gospel is ripe for a kicking. Out of step with the other three is *The First One*, a song which sneeters alarmingly close to throwaway dance music, and *The Sort Of Thing You Hear On The Radio All The Time*... until you cotton onto what it's about. Dance music rarely attempts to be so touching now, let alone succeeds.

It isn't decided yet what the release order will be. They will appear, when they appear, on her own 'Heroines' label via London Records. If they are successful, other stuff will follow, this being one of those two-singles-and-an-option deals... Sheila has no wish to become a 'singles artist', though, since the promotion commitments are far from her idea of fun — "Somebody asked me about my beauty treatment! Can you believe that? I thought it was outrageous! I suppose I ought to come up with some suitable answer to daft questions like that..."

Sheila, this is just the beginning...!

● interview by Marc Issue
● photograph by Tony Barratt

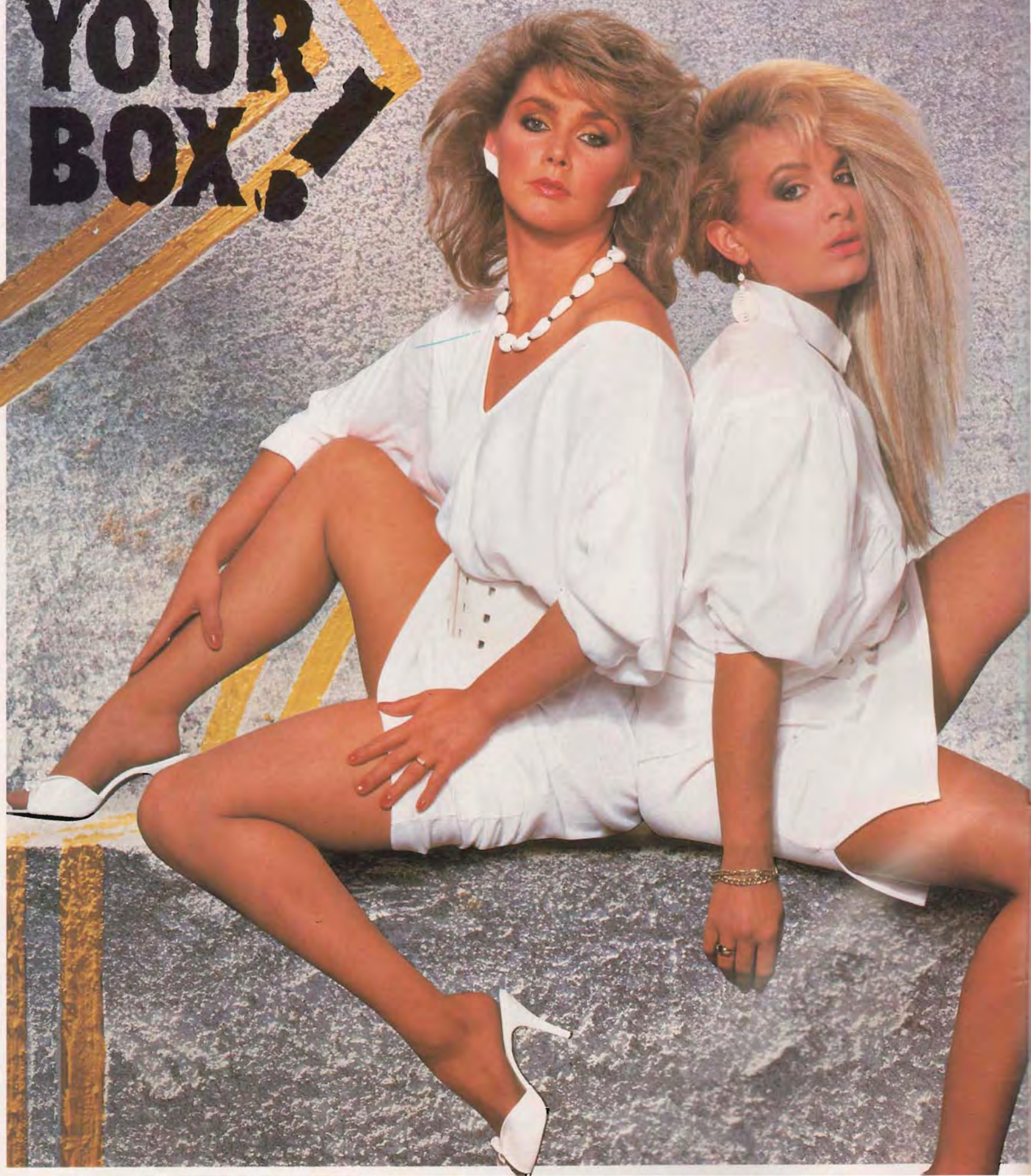


**It is written that
size is no guarantee of strength.**

GOLD LABEL IS ALMOST TWO AND A HALF TIMES MORE CONCENTRATED THAN ORDINARY BEERS. IT'S FERMENTED FOR AT LEAST TWICE AS LONG.
GOLD LABEL IS DEFINITELY NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH. **THE BARLEY WINE THAT'S NO SMALL BEER.**



**ROCK
YOUR
BOX**





SHARP GF 570 LESS BUCKS MORE FIZZ



"There was a programme on TV about what would happen if there was a nuclear war. And I think if a nuclear war did happen I'd be thinking: Is Boy George safe?"

If you've ever wondered just how obsessive a fan can become in the worship of his or her particular idol, then **Starlust** by Fred and Judy Vermorel (Comet, £4.95) will give you over two hundred pages' worth of some of the more extreme, weird and frankly alarming examples. Collated from numerous interviews, ansaphone messages, written accounts and actual letters to the stars, the book mainly consists of the (mainly sexual) secret fantasies of fans. Since statistics are

very conspicuous by their absence, it's impossible to know how representative a sample we have here – Fred Vermorel, in his somewhat overstated 'Afterword', hints that these extreme examples are more typical than most of us would like to think. I wonder. At any rate, you don't need a degree in psychology to realise that many of the subjects of this book have latched onto a star figure as the result of some basic insecurity or instability. What's more, many of the fantasies seem to be purely the result of an adolescent mind given the opportunity to run wild, and most of the telephoned accounts appear to have functioned as little more than an aid to hand relief – a



'legitimate' dirty call. Nevertheless, at other times we are offered a fascinating insight into the workings of fanhood and for once we are shown the other side of the celebrity coin: it's not just the stars who become victims to the star system — in fact the casualty rate amongst the fans is far higher. The one-way nature of the fan-star relationship and the resentment that this can engender is strikingly illustrated in one quote by a former David Bowie fan:

"I now have the kind of wisdom to know how pop stars can damage people by their life-styles and by the kind of money they throw around and the kind of images they present on television. People can get so

taken away with it that they're actually in danger of believing that they are that person. Well, I never believed I was David Bowie... but I actually believed that I could have a relationship with him. This was his influence and it was rather damaging. And I think he's so detached now from what he's done to people that he doesn't realise in all his wealth how he's influenced them. Because he's actually walked away from them and has lived a life of cream because we've allowed him to.

"It's a terrible thing he did really. He's got a lot to answer for."

Anyone for Smash Hits?

Tim Hulse



Time Out

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

january

february

march

april

may

june

july

august

september

october

november

december

1968
1969
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1985

● The Londoner's diary

DAVID HISCOCK



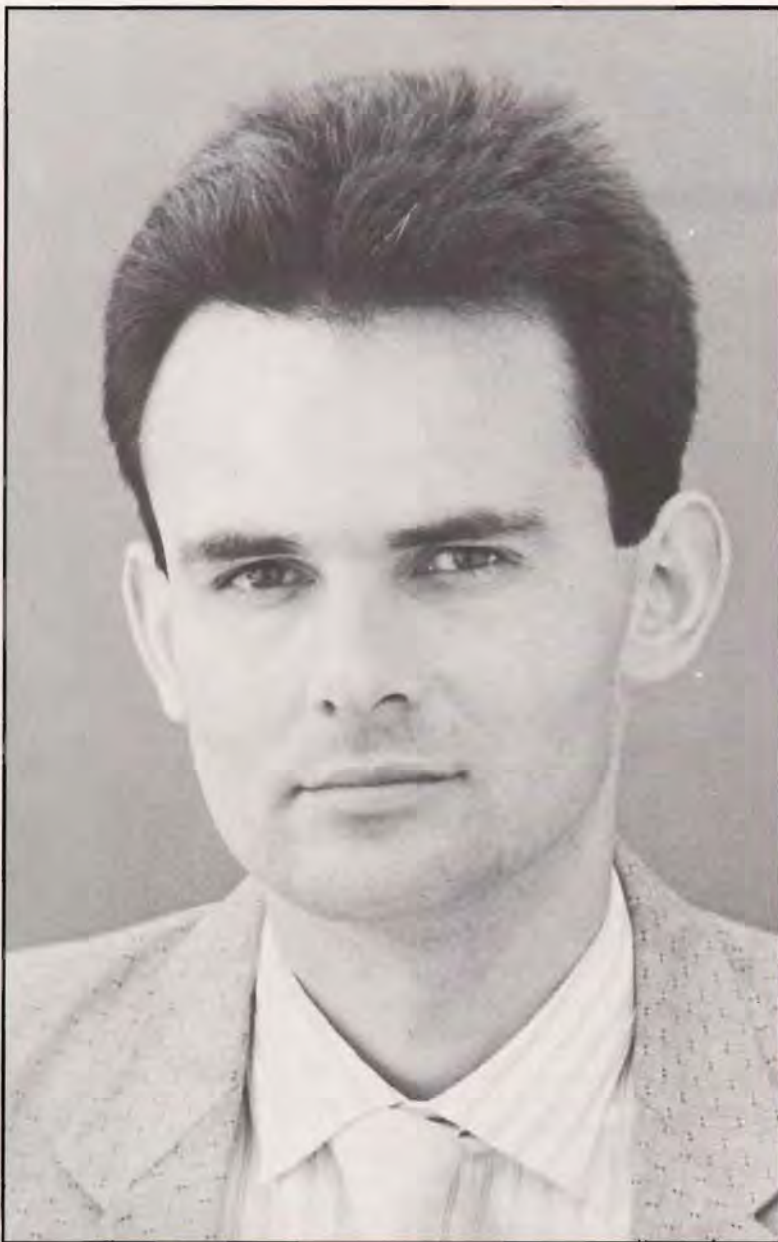
We should have known something like this would happen. In order to draw your attention to our subscriptions page (only £11.00 including post and etc.), we innocently used a very wonderful picture of our very wonderful fashion editor wearing a shirt he'd inscribed with a few words of wisdom from the typewriter of one Truman Capote. Within a matter of days a new T-shirt appeared in Carnaby Street. Yep, it's that quote again. Shame they couldn't quite get the spelling right. Iain 'Trendsetter' Webb is currently looking for a new quote.

The pale imitation.



DAVID HISCOCK

BLITZ



Ian Pye read the Melody Maker as a boy, admits he once wore flares and thought the last thing he'd ever be was a music journalist. Which might make it seem rather surprising that at the age of thirty he has now been appointed the new editor of NME. More appropriately, he has been a student of both English and Sociology and nowadays wears the kind of pink Fred Perry shirts that even Paolo Hewitt would be proud of.

An affable character, Pye comes to the NME after four years at Melody Maker, where he was a staff writer concerning himself mainly with black music. With the single exception of heavy metal, though, he says his tastes go right across the board, including "good white pop music". Are we talking Wham here, I wondered? "Good lord, no," he replied. This will no doubt come as a relief to many.

He talks about "ushering in a new era at the NME", although he's keeping his cards very close to his chest. "I'd like to continue the radical tradition of the NME and I'd like it to be a little more dangerous. Music at the moment has become so frighteningly safe, and there's a rather unpleasant, incestuous relationship between the music industry, which keeps turning over the same faces, and a large part of the music press, which

also keeps turning over these faces on the covers of their titles. I think NME is the one paper that can break through.

"NME will continue to cover all areas that affect young people. I think we need to bring more journalistic input into NME, in the sense that we are a newspaper and therefore we will have hard news pieces about young people. We're not just going to have Neil Kinnock on the cover and have that rather worthy left wing image of covering those sort of figures. I want to see us going out and interviewing people from the right as well, in a critical way. And the same thing goes for people in pop - we're not going to say 'War On Pop' and then not go near it. We're going to go out and tackle those people and interview them and actually take them on."

These are hard times for the traditional tabloid music papers. Most of their younger readership has been eaten away by the rise of pop glossies such as Smash Hits and No.1, this month sees the relaunch of Record Mirror as RM and the launch of The Hit, both glossy weeklies aimed at the later teens. Nevertheless, Pye has faith in the immediacy, edge and generally high standard of writing at the NME. Time will tell. End of advert.

Tim Hulse

BLOOD & GUM IN HYPE CITY

● Interview by Marc Issue

● Photograph by Mark Bayley

1. An almost obligatory opening quote.

"There is a young woman writing on the West coast who has received no attention at all. Her name is Kathy Acker. She is literally the wildest writer going... Her prose is direct, fast, sexy, hot, horny, furiously honest... Insofar as I can see, she's the dark horse in American Literature. Not for fame, but for influence. Originality. Sheer voice. Guts."

Oh yes, indeed, it's going to be one of those...!

At a prior meeting to the alleged interview, Kathy Acker and I had considered fielding a literary symposium, gathering together some of the "leading" writers of the day. Edna O'Brien, for example, would be invited to speak on the subject of "My First Orgasm". Others would follow.

We got tired of that idea pretty quickly — some of us (both of us actually) wanted to carry on working in this crummy town for just a little while longer. Instead, we thought about a three-way conversation we might have had — who, that is to say, the third person might have been. Derek Jarman, we wondered...? But he's finally got the bread together to start shooting *Caravaggio*, and we wouldn't want to break his concentration after all this time. Shhhh. And JG Ballard cropped up, as he does... it would have been pretty interesting, but we wouldn't, we thought, get many words of our own in... and the designer Rachel Auburn? Well, the same really, and where is Rachel right now, anyway...?

We got tired of that idea as well, and we decided to do *some sort* of interview...

So — what becomes a legend most? Eh? EH???

2. Well — wishers.

"... Kathy Acker, eh? Well, I hope you're going to give her a hard time, take her down a peg or two. It's

about time someone did. Her *and* William bloody Burroughs..." — A Colleague (A Martin Amis fan, actually!).

Would it be appropriate, under the circumstances, to form this into a slack approximation of the very stuff that has made her reputation? Of course it would not. It would be just about the naughtiest thing imaginable. There is something biting the back of my left leg. My typewriter has broken down, I'm limping on with the faithful hand-cranked model. I find that there are intriguing omissions from the thread of the conversation we are alleged to have had. Kathy's answering machine tells me that Kathy is in Paris and won't be back for simply ages, but if I want to leave a message... and so on. How much more of this can you take?

There's a tenuous link, but a lucky break. Oscar Wilde said to me only last week that "Paris, France" is where all good American women go when they die. Not wanting to tempt fate or anything, but we can make this bit an appreciation, an — oh, if you insist — an apology for Kathy Acker?

You should know all about her by now. There's been a little flurry of press in the last few weeks, and eighteen months or so ago, she was interviewed in this very magazine by Tim Hulse. Stout chap, he obtained in quotation marks all the really essential stuff, and what was there left for me to say? When you come right down to it?

Kathy Acker, February 1984: "I don't have anything to say... I don't see that there is anything to write about. If you have a point of view, that's when you have something to write about. But I don't have a point of view..."

That was last year. This year, we arranged to meet at a flash new mediaperson's club in Dean Street, six thirty, don't be late. We were both early, ran into each other down the road, Kathy still flushed from some sort of dodgy activity in a gymnasium,

whatever one of those might be. Something to do with health. Yeuch! (Is it alright to mention health in a stylish magazine, chaps?) Installed in a voluminous and tastefully blue sofa, we sipped our drinks, on went the tape recorder, and the interview began. Hup!

The conversation, as you might expect, turned immediately to religion...

Kathy: "I don't know, when it comes to personal religion, whether I'm pro or anti... I'm pretty much against organised religion. As far as kids on the street are concerned, I don't know what sort of choice it is, between junk and religion. That makes it sound like a game I used to play with a kid I was taking care of (!) — you know, 'Would you rather be a murderer or an arsonist? Would you rather be an arsonist or a terrorist?' — And would you rather be a junkie or a Moonie?" (laughs)..."

MI (suddenly realising what a terribly deprived childhood he had): The choice seems to be Junk, Jesus or Bruce Springsteen at the moment...

KA: "What is this love of Bruce Springsteen that's grown up all of a sudden? It does seem very much like a religion..."

MI: Clearly it's a return to Old Values...

KA: "Yeah, Old Values — money, money and money. The guy on *Saturday Review* told me he was getting more mail about Bruce Springsteen right now than anybody else. He was quite annoyed when I told him I really didn't care about Bruce Springsteen one way or the other. I don't see what all the fuss is about — sure he's a good rocker, but that can't be it — lots of people are... if you compare it with what Joan Jett was doing... is she still playing? What's she doing now?"

MI: Cashing royalty cheques, I suppose. Maybe she's touring somewhere...

KA: "Really? I thought she wasn't doing so well..."

MI: She had her handful of American hits to fall

TS



back on. I suppose she still gets the odd payment in the post for Jukebox plays of *I Love Rock'n'Roll* in Turkey, and things like that...

And so we went on in this fashion, Kathy asking slightly more questions than me, and neither of us answering very many, but boy! We got through some subject matter: Live Aid (rather a lot of Live Aid, and, I guiltily recall, no small amount of soap box stuff from your correspondent); why hardly any black groups get into the British charts...; what a famous and extremely hip New York independent record label of the early eighties spent most of its money on...; the new book...

Did I say New Book? I see that I did. It's just finished and delivered to the publishers last week and it's... it's...

Kathy: "...It's called *Don Quixote* — it's about a woman who becomes a knight in order to have adventures. Don't ask me why, but she becomes a knight by having an abortion. In the absence of human companions, and realising that she should find her comforts where she takes them — or should that be, takes her comforts where she finds them? — Sancho Panza's place is taken by a succession of dawgs."

Yes, dawgs. Almost, but not really, as in Deputy Dawg, one supposes...

We might have talked a little more about the new book, but we got the giggles and strayed off the point. Blessed are the digressors, for they shall get there eventually, and by the scenic route...

3. Flashback. Special effects, shimmering screen, harp music...

Nottingham, several weeks earlier. Kathy giving a reading. It isn't strictly a part of the postmodernist tradition — if there is such a thing, which I doubt — for novelists to give readings. Never mind. Let us assume that Kathy has appropriated this practice along with some of the other literary flotsam and jetsam she has picked up along her merry way. Besides, a gig is — how you say in English — a gig, right?

Kathy is a good little reader. She had them spellbound, mate, gasping, thoroughly taken aback! Out rolled a slab of *Don Quixote* — the explanation, the build-up almost as good as the extract itself. And then, by popular demand, more of the same. Kathy's dawgs mooched and gloomed, lighting up *Don Quixote*, something to look forward to. By way of an encore — a rare, genuinely unexpected encore, it seemed — Kathy's *Deerhunter* piece. Not clear in our minds whether to laugh, cry, or recoil in horror and disgust at her fairytale of incest, suicide and Vietnam, we did all three... well worth the price of admission, whatever it was...

4. Trendy

MI: Do you think people get to be trendy differently here in London than the way they do in New York?

KA: "'Trendiness' is a whole different thing in New York from what it is here. In New York there's a kind of... community agreement about who's out and who's in. And if you're in, that's all there is to it. You're in. People do get nervous about whether they're famous or not, but that's like being Flavour-of-the-Week, it doesn't make any difference. But here it's very very different, you can be trendy at one point, and then you're not..."

MI: It's possible in London to be tremendously vital and highly thought of in some circles, and nowhere at all in others. There's all these funny little pockets of opinion...

KA: "There's a funny thing about the people in rock here, and the people who are in other things — they don't know each other! I was with some people last night, literary people, you could say, and I mentioned someone... quite big in rock music, I forget who... and they'd never even heard of them! I had to explain who I meant, and they said, 'Oh, I never listen to music!' — you'd expect that from some people. Book publishers, you don't expect them to know anything about anything..."

MI: There's quite a few people around who think it a great virtue not to know anything about anything except what they are *involved* in. It isn't so much chance ignorance as a deliberate policy, a conscious attitude...

KA: "I suppose I can see that. There are certain kinds of books that I won't read anymore, because they make me so angry, although you don't know, there may be one or two good things to be found in them..."

MI: Such as...?

KA: "Oh... straight stuff, real commercial literature — not *schlock* literature, I do read *schlock* literature... More the sort of... *uppity* straight literature, like Philip Roth (*sniggers*)... I think they're writing about something that doesn't exist anymore, and I hate all those lies..."

5. What Philip Roth might have said to have offended Kathy.

"Writers are turning away from the grander social and political phenomena of our times to take the self as their subject... the sheer fact of self, the vision of self as inviolate, powerful and nervy, as the only real thing in an unreal environment..."

(Philip Roth, *Writing American Fiction* 1961) It stands to reason, dunnit, really? Our Kathy, bless her, is proceeding in *exactly* the opposite direction to Mister Roth — plunging into the social and the political, simultaneously erasing not only the self within the novel (although she does give herself a walk-on part in *My Death, My Life* by Pier Paolo Pasolini) but has set about hacking great lumps off of that mythical monster, the Author's Ego — by kidnapping other writers' characters, plotlines, titles and so forth.

OK — you can go and play with the interview again now...

6. Publicity and hype, English style...

KA: "This 'trendy' thing over here though, doesn't exist in New York in the same way at all — not that there isn't a fashion thing, but that it operates quite differently. Here, it's as if everything is manufactured. Someone gets into Time Out and City Limits in the same week. It isn't as if now and again a paper writes about you — they all write at once, and you're trendy — for a week. They like to manufacture people here."

"And when I saw the ICA operating the publicity for *Lulu Unchained* (a stage performance adapted by Kathy) I thought it was incredible! Like, I'd said a few things about the play — and forgetting the fact that they didn't use the play at all — but I thought they'd put out something... you know, truthful, about the play... 'Oh no no no Kathy we don't do it that way...' they told me. And then these outrageous things were coming out, and when I told them I didn't like what was going out they were saying, 'Oh, don't worry, we'll change it, dear...' sort of thing. THE PUBLICITY HAD NO RELATION TO ANYTHING, IT WAS UNBELIEVABLE!"

"I mean, they do have publicity drives in America, but nobody *believes* them! In New York, you tell somebody 'hey, I was in the paper today', they'll laugh and go, 'really? what did they say about you?' But here people seem to believe what they read in the papers!"

MI: Virtually all coverage of the arts by the media is the direct result of professionally run publicity campaigns — it escapes people's notice...

KA: "That's what I'm saying — why *don't* people see that, it's so obvious. The people who are interviewed say often enough that they are not *like* how they are represented in the media... THIS IS HYPE CITY! HOW YOU DRESS IS HOW YOU ARE!"

MI: But the hype is not taken *personally*...

KA: "...Maybe it's the accent, the accent is the thing that dictates what you are..."

MI: I think it's precisely because the hype is so widespread that people put up with it. They are aware of it going on, but they don't *personalize* it, or feel that they are actually *being lied to*, because it's the norm. It's the way we do business...

KA: "It's the way you *manufacture* meaning, as well as the way you do business, the two feed off of each other. That's what's different here from New York. And the record industry seems to be one of the biggest industries here..."

MI: Well, it's not declining as fast as all the others...

KA: "If someone wanted to make themselves a lot of free publicity here, they could do it. It wouldn't be exactly difficult. If you've got a little bit of money behind you for the *right* advertising..."

7. He-e-e-ey!

Kathy: Hey... I really like this desultory interview technique!

ANDREW POPPY

The Beating of Wings

THE OBJECT IS A HUNGRY WOLF

Flute: Geoff Warren
Clarinet: Roger Heaton
Bass Clarinet: Rossy Allam
Baritone: Andy Blake
Soprano Saxophone: Mary Phillips
Alto and Tenor Saxophone: Elizabeth Perry (leader)
Vocals: Gillian Cohen
Piano and Keyboard: Anna Muffice
Violins: Judith Pearce
Violas: Andrew Roberts
Cellos: Joelyn Paak
Double Basses: Sally Bennett
Alexander Robinson
Justin Perrin
Justin Pearson

32 FRAMES FOR ORCHESTRA

Conductor: Andrew Poppy
Violins: Elizabeth Perry (leader)
Violas: Gillian Cohen
Cellos: Rossy Allam
Double Basses: Judith Pearce
Piano and Keyboard: Anna Muffice
Violins: Gillian Cohen
Violas: Andrew Roberts
Cellos: Joelyn Paak
Double Basses: Sally Bennett
Alexander Robinson
Justin Perrin
Justin Pearson

LISTENING IN

Keyboards/Voice: Andrew Poppy
Guitar: Jack Hughes
Trumpet: Bruce Nockles
Percussion Samples: Andrew Poppy
Text: The heart of the matter
Is this
All's well
All's well in the world
All's well in the world
of intervention
That's Listening In

CADENZA

Piano: Andrew Poppy
Electric Piano: Glenn Perrin

COMPOSED, ARRANGED AND PRODUCED BY ANDREW POPPY. RECORDING ENGINEER STUART BRUCE. MIX ENGINEER NICK RYAN (ALSO RECORDING ENGINEER FOR CADENZA). OVERDUB ENGINEERS STUART BRUCE, BOB KRAUSHAAR. TAPE OPERATORS Renny Hill, Steve Reece. PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATION AND ADMINISTRATION KAREN GOODMAN. COPYING RORY ALLAM. RECORDED ON SONY 24 TRACK DIGITAL, EXCEPT LISTENING IN - 48 TRACK ANALOGUE. WOLF - RECORDED AND MIXED AT SARM WEST. 32 FRAMES - RECORDED LIVE AT SARM WEST, OVERDUBS AT KONK/SARM EAST/COMFORTS PLACE. MIXED AT COMFORTS PLACE. LISTENING IN - RECORDED AT KONK/EDEN, MIXED AT SARM EAST. CADENZA - RECORDED LIVE AND MIXED AT SARM WEST.



Z T T I Q 5

MY COMPASS.....
IT'S GOING CRAZY!

HOLY SMOKE! WE'RE BEING
PULLED TOWARDS THAT BOTTLE
SHAPED ISLAND!

JEEZ! IT LOOKS LIKE
WE'VE HIT PARADISE!

AS FLIGHT 19 FLEW OVER THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE, THEIR MIGHTY AVENGERS WERE POWERLESS AGAINST SOME MYSTERIOUS MAGNETIC FORCE...

EVEN THE SKY DOESN'T
LOOK LIKE IT SHOULD!

NO WONDER THE
OTHERS NEVER
MADE IT BACK!



- Interview by Mark Brennan
- Photograph by Annie Leibovitz

Matt Dillon

local hero

Matt Dillon's first film was *Over the Edge*. Since then he's consolidated his reputation as America's leading young actor with roles in, amongst others, Coppola's *Rumble Fish* and *The Outsiders*. His latest film, *The Flamingo Kid*, is released here in October.

MATT Dillon's earliest recollection is of a ceiling light turning into a face as he watched. He thinks he was about three years old when this happened, and the memory is still vivid. I rack my brains in order to bestow some profound significance on this truly unremarkable happening, but all in vain. Serves me right for asking the question. Now, what's your favourite colour, Matt?

OVER the last couple of years a crop of young American actors has emerged and flourished. I'm talking about the likes of Nicolas Cage, Sean Penn, Tom Cruise and, of course, Matt Dillon. In the early days they were distinguished as a group only by the fact that as individuals it was nigh on impossible to tell them apart. They seemed to have adopted the same screen persona: that of the outwardly macho, inwardly vulnerable street punk from that treasured American side-show, the wrong side of town. Whether the roles gave them no alternative or this juvenile posturing just came naturally is a moot point. That their work was unified and characterised by a numbing lack of imagination, however, is not. I had visions of them calling one another up after a day's auditioning to discuss how each had fared – rather like the girls used to withdraw and re-group in the ladies' at school dances to assess progress and rethink strategies: "Do you think he fancies me or what?" – because if these guys didn't all end up in the same movies they had certainly all read for the same parts.

More recently, however, Cage has appeared in Alan Parker's *Birdy*, Penn in *The Falcon and the Snowman*, Cruise in the wonderful *Risky Business* and, shortly to be released, Ridley Scott's *Legend* and almost overnight a generation has come of age. Matt Dillon's new film, *The Flamingo Kid*, in the cinemas next month, echoes some aspects of his previous performances, but also represents something of a departure. For a start he only gets into one fight and even then reluctantly. Most importantly, though, and in stark contrast to the wrist-slitters he's been involved with so far, *The Flamingo Kid* is a comedy.

It deals with a working-class teenager whose outlook is drastically altered when he gets a summer job at an exclusive beach club on Long Island. Throughout the season he is seduced by the capitalist ethos which the club represents, by the fast buck philosophy, the glamour and ostentation, and by a girl called Carla Samson, before the real American values are reaffirmed in the obligatory public embrace with which the boy and his disaffected father are reconciled.

"*Flamingo Kid* was a pleasant experience. I made a lot of friends on that picture, people I consider real friends to me now. But it was a funny thing with that film. I felt I missed the whole experience. It looks so easy on the screen but it was really so difficult for me. A lot of times it's after the fact, but sometimes when you're working on something you just know it's coming together and it's a beautiful feeling. But it can also be heart-breaking when you know it's not working. You're giving your best and it's just not coming through. Acting is definitely an emotional experience; there's no feeling greater than knowing you've succeeded in your objectives. Garry Marshall was a great director. He left room for the actors to

experiment, bring in their own ideas. He's very receptive to that and I think I learned a lot."

Flamingo Kid is only Marshall's second feature. His first, *Young Doctors in Love*, was packaged here on video as some sort of soft-porn sex romp, which it categorically was not. A whole army of disappointed punters will testify that it's about as titillating as an enema. His earlier experience was confined to television for which he created *Laverne and Shirley* and *Mork and Mindy*. With *Flamingo Kid* it becomes obvious that his is a talent to watch. He has imbued his film with considerable warmth, affection and humour, and gone resolutely against the prevailing grain to suggest to his audience that the quality of life is determined by more than a bank balance.

IT IS ironic that Dillon's part in *The Flamingo Kid* should have proved the toughest of his career when it actually mirrors more faithfully than any other his real background and personality. He was born twenty-one years ago to Irish-American, Roman Catholic parents and is one of six children, which is about par for the course for Irish-American Roman Catholics. The opportunity to work in cinema came when he was just fourteen and harboured no acting ambitions whatsoever.

"They were making a film called *Over the Edge* and were looking for real kids, as opposed to theatrical kids. They approached me in the hall of junior high school and asked if I'd like to audition. It had never occurred to me but I felt that the character was me from first reading it. It was something I'd created as well. I played a street kid with a lot of bravado, a kid who really thought he was tough. He





came from a mixed-up background, which wasn't me. My background was stable. But I did relate to one thing, the sense of mischief. To a certain degree I was a trouble-maker. The character created an image for himself, which is exactly what I was doing.

"Vic Ramos, who cast the film, wanted to manage me. I was fortunate enough to get work but it wasn't necessarily easy. There were long gaps between jobs. When I was sixteen there weren't a lot of films being made for people of that age but I was lucky enough to get involved with a couple."

Vic Ramos proceeded to promote his discovery very heavily through the teen magazines and succeeded in making the face a familiar one. It was presumably also Vic Ramos who saw to it that the message got back to me that I was not, *absolutely* not, to ask what it was like to be a teen-idol or a sex symbol. I realised that to ask what it was like *not* being a sex symbol would be to risk giving offence, even if it did call the publicity bluff. But since the whole topic spells utter tedium anyway I shall move on.

It was the novels of S.E. Hinton that gave a welcome leg-up to the careers of Matt Dillon and his contemporaries, who became adept at the tormented idealist look but found that the required morose inarticulacy came a little easier. 'Who is S.E.Hinton?', I hear you cry. "Susie" (To Her Friends) Hinton's quietly poetic stories about the pain and preciousness of adolescence are set reading in American high schools. Everyone, but everyone, has read them. To date, three have been adapted for the cinema (*Tex*, *The Outsiders*, *Rumble Fish*) and Dillon

has starred in all. In keeping with Hinton's writing, the films are marked by an uneasy fusion of romanticism and realism and, in this country at least, were received with less than requisite enthusiasm. Yet few would deny that Dillon stood out from the crowd, even though his roles in all three were closely inter-related.

The admirable Mickey Rourke, who co-starred in *Rumble Fish*, has called into question the staying-power of the younger wave of actors. His own vagrant past quickly taught him the business of survival, but he justifiably wonders what experience Dillon and friends will draw on when confronted with more demanding parts in the future.

"Survival's more than eating just three squares a day," Dillon comments. "If you're out there at such a young age making movies all the time, you're not experiencing life that you can recall later, but that's not true of me. I've always taken long periods of time off to travel. I want to live life to the full. I don't shelter myself in any way. You have to feel pain, happiness, sorrow."

THE YOUNG New Yorker has already completed two further films. The first, *Rebel*, is set in Australia during World War Two and concerns a marine who goes AWOL while recovering from an injury and falls in love with a night-club singer. The other, *Targets*, a spy thriller, is directed by Arthur Penn and co-stars Gene Hackman.

"I'm awed by that guy. He's one of my favourite actors. I truly respect him. He's so exciting to work with. He does whatever it takes. He cuts through so

much crap. He doesn't use tricks or gimmicks. He's so strong. *The French Connection* is one of my favourite performances..."

Dillon must be doing something right. Pauline Kael, the last word in American film criticism, was moved to comment in her review of *Tex* in The New Yorker: "Actors who have laboured to learn the rudiments of their profession must want to kill Matt Dillon, the open-faced young star of *Tex*. He's a 'natural', who takes to the camera with the baffling ease of a puppy. He doesn't apply any particular sexual heat in this movie, and he isn't crafty like James Dean..." Kael, who I'm sure will be flattered to learn of my endorsement of her views, has hit the nail on the head here. There is, in Dillon, simply not the same tiresome recourse to a series of self-conscious obtrusive mannerisms. Some actors construct a character so deliberately, piling distracting detail on top of detail, idiosyncrasy on idiosyncrasy, that the result is sheer artifice. Dillon doesn't subscribe to the 'Method' approach, then, that recently persuaded Nicolas Cage to remove a couple of teeth, mummify himself, and generally put himself through the pain barrier for *Birdy*?

"Some aspects of it, sure. I think everybody has to find his own method", puns Dillon. "I like to work with the face and the voice. You know, the more colour the better. If I play someone from Texas I have to really find out what it's like to grow up at a certain period in Texas. I like to base my characters on real people so I observe the whole time. I throw on a hat and some sunglasses and I can go unnoticed. I still ride the subway ... but not at 3 o'clock in the morning in the South Bronx."



"You can get a bit scared of it all, coming back into it... I don't want to sound negative, but it is always a bit like being locked away."

THE strange thing when I meet Kate Bush is that she seems so startlingly *ordinary*. Dressed in jeans, boots and sweatshirt, with little make-up and a lot of charm, she is slightly 'sweet', very much at ease, pert and perky, perfectly friendly. Her tiny tear-shaped face is one of bright delight and then wan concern. She looks tired and rather *plain* until she smiles — sweetly enough certainly to make the thought of tackling the tickly, tricky subjects (the validity of *The Rumours*, the calculation of her image, the spite and spit of the *Vermorels*' book on her) too churlish to bother with.

She is sincere and considerate, enormously perceptive (she asks me if I mind if she smokes but not if I want one). Huddled up on a cushion, she doesn't look at all striking, neither frail waif nor seductive sorceress. She is sort of gooeey, er drippy, with a girlish *soppy* sense of humour (oh dear, forgive me). We sit in a big bare room, a dance mirror along one wall, a large floral painting of a baby floating out of a sewer pipe in one corner and two Swedish chairs, a Spanish guitar, a Delius record and ashtrays scattered around. A huge calm toy dog watches us from one corner.

"It's a *really* nice day today," she sings as she makes the tea. She is terribly nice and looks like she hasn't got a care in the world.

Kate Bush has been away...somewhere — I don't really care where or doing what but everyone seems to have heard something fantastic or drastic about her — for nearly three years. But all the rumours, about break-ups and breakdowns, loves and deaths, this and that, that drift round this business like a nasty, unavoidable smell, all falter against her sunny charms and happy confidence.

Are you happy? I ask her.

"Ooh yes," she says with a childlike delight that could kill any rumour.

She's very relaxed. When asked about a sex symbol she says three words: "Goshi" and "Klaus Kinski". We find she's still saying those classic quaint hippy-isms she's so renowned and teased for. Things that are "cosmic" and "karmic", talking of "new energies", the "inspirational forces of teachers", "where we're at" or "having built myself as a person". Once she even tries to stop herself saying she had "found herself". But it slipped out. She doesn't care. It's all very fetching.

So she's been away, writing, dancing, building a studio, making a slow, involved, neatly epic new album, watching videos, thinking...

"There was some re-evaluation, yes. Taking so long a break made me realise what was important, which was my work much more than being famous. I did think it would be harder coming back. Actually, it's quite exciting, coming out to a Brand New World, meeting people, not being locked away... communication's a really important thing."

The phrase drifts out like a wisp of smoke; she says it to herself as much as to me.

Did you miss it at all?

"Actually...no. I didn't."

It's almost a whisper. Then a smile. Like a secret.

Signing for EMI when she was, incredibly, just sixteen, Kate was number one for four weeks with her first single, a centre of attention at nineteen. With eleven hits, those fierce, fraught, erratic, erotic videos, the Pamela Stephenson impersonations, the *Vermorel* book, the devotion and obsessions... she has been ever since. One wonders about the effect on one so sensitive.

Can you stand the scrutiny?

"By and large, yes. When it started I had to be quite strong. I couldn't cope with it as well now as I did then. I've changed a lot since then. I wasn't naive, no. I was more innocent then, but not the lost little girl the press presented me as. They patronised

WOW!

(revisited)

● Interview by Jim Shelley

● Photograph by Guido Harari

me. I do get shocked by the attention, though. The way I work is very isolated, I won't go out for months, literally, so there's definite culture shock when I do."

Are you shy?

"Yes, I am. Not as shy as I used to be. I'm still fighting it. Why? Oh, there's nothing good about being shy, it should never stop you from doing things — especially on a work level."

Can you chat up people?

"Oh... I don't know. That's probably when I'm at my most shy — in social situations."

Her voice trails away, as if she'd almost forgotten those.

Do you feel vulnerable, at a disadvantage, meeting people?

"No, not really. It's true a person's music says a lot about them, is revealing, but that doesn't unnerve me."

How do people react to you? Do you frighten them?

"I think they're great, actually. Great. I do frighten them a bit, though."

They think you're a bit strange?

"Yes, maybe."

Do they take up the image...the sexuality...the strangeness...the...

"The weird energies...?"

A perfect phrase.

"No, people are mostly very nice. Very gentle and positive, mostly."

And are you a bit strange?

"A bit, yes, I suppose."

Always at her most animated and cheerful when she's back in the world of her work — the engineers, musicians, songs and studios and producers — Kate Bush is already looking forward to the next two-year project.

"When I come out into the world like this, it's only to say, 'Here's the album', so I can get on with the next one."

When she says the fame is enjoyable "for the opportunities, the doors you can knock and that will open", they're all to do with work. All the "really brilliant people", it's taken her to meet turn out to be engineers or musicians. She sees her best quality as being her ability "to work for long periods of time".

She does, though, confess to a certain conflict: "Being shy and wanting communication, being a loner and liking people. Feedback is very important to me."

Indeed, when I mention what a neat series of singles she's had (*The Man With The Child In His Eyes*, *Wow*, *Hammer Horror*, *Breathing*, *Babooshka*, *Army Dreamers*, *The Dreaming*, the cane-swishing

Sat In Your Lap and the new one, a most subtle, sneaky pop single, her most modern song yet) she is positively overjoyed. She seems very easily — if quite touchingly — pleased.

"I can't tell you what a buzz it gives me for you to say that, really," she gushes, clearly delighted.

She fends off the sticky business of her obsessive, fascinated followers and the *Vermorel* episode with a mixture of calm and cuteness, innocence and knowing, that says she won't be drawn into thinking about them.

"People say there are these people...I don't know what they mean," and insisting, "No, nothing that was written about me ever hurt me, no." She goes on: "Music is such a powerful force. If people are affected by my music the way I was — by early Roxy, or Lotte Lenya or *Sgt. Pepper*, for instance — that, to me, is staggering. I can't relate to that at all." And maybe she can't.

Who do you do it for — yourself, for family, some vague immortality...

"I'm not sure. It's very important for me that my friends and family...It's almost to say, 'I'm writing this and I want it to be as good as you'd like it be', like choosing a present...The immortality of music, it's an extraordinary concept, isn't it? People say I'm a perfectionist, I insist on things being right. But I don't know that anything can be perfect. When you're making it, though, you know it's going to be like that forever..."

She says it like a child: simple, astonished, overawed. She holds her breath.

Kate admits she is very happy, agrees she's probably "more stable than I've ever been. I've certainly relaxed." When I ask her if she thinks most about the past, present or future, she is pleased to say, "The present. I think a lot less about the past now. Which is good."

"I've always felt there are more happy things to life than sad, yes. I feel that's the only way you survive. I've had a very happy life, especially when I left school and was with Lindsay Kemp, it was so liberating, for the first time I was an individual, mobile, free. I haven't found life very difficult, no. I'm very lucky."

Do things happen to you or do you make them happen?

"I tend to believe that what you put out comes back. I think you *can* make things happen."

What makes you happy?

"Well I have so little time. I don't have a manager so I'm always organising things. Films amaze me, films like *Don't Look Now*, *Hitchcock*, *The Godfather*, totally, totally brilliant, *The Innocents*. I'm sure my love for films will take me closer to them although I

don't know that I want to be in them."

Is the single about the notion it might be better to be dead — 'Doing a deal with God, get him to swap places', 'Running up the hill' to Heaven, to be where He is?

"That's a nice interpretation. It's very much about love, really, trying to keep it alive. I don't know that perfect love exists in any human being but I don't think it can be encouraged enough."

Do you think about death much?

"Yes...my imagination's got a lot of negative triggers. Images are always much stronger when they're negative."

I've had just a day to think about Kate Bush and she seems to me an intriguing, strikingly strange affair. Certainly the impish, demure, modest, meek, very plaintive person I met didn't resemble the stern, impressively *disturbed* figure, clad in cloak and crossbow and proud, dramatic stare who stepped challengingly into the soft smugness of the *Wogan* show the night before. Nor the voluptuous, ferocious creature who lies, breathless and abandoned, over the next LP sleeve. I wonder, turning the rumour on its head, if it isn't in fact the severe isolation of her life rather than the greedy glare of press and public that gets to her most.

She talks of "ringing friends after two years since the last album was finished and being able to talk with them again."

She mentions with a touching but very fresh sadness, the death of Klaus Nomi (who died two years ago at least) almost as if she'd just heard.

She says of signing to EMI at sixteen, "It's quite normal these days, though, surely. *Bands*, bands are quite young, aren't they?"

"It really is such a relief it is finished. I know the work has arranged my life but I'm very grateful, it's given me a lot. It's a little like living life *faster*."

Is it so important?

"It's a very close second to my friends and family" (that constant, enigmatic phrase). She calls out to one of them: "Would you say I have a separate life from my work?"

"Not at all," says the voice, "But that's how it has to be."

"Your friends are the people you work with," she continues, "I don't think it's possible to have a social life...really."

She looks a touch apologetic, sounds rather vague and the hint of uncertainty drifting over the silence distracts us both. It strikes me then that Kate Bush lives in a very small world, and at that moment, for no real reason, I feel rather sorry for her.

CURIOUSER & CURIOUSER

In the six and a half years since the release of their first single, *Killing An Arab*, The Cure have released seven albums, with another, *The Head On The Door*, on the way. In that time, Robert Smith has managed to be a part-time Banshee and half of The Glove. He's also eaten rather a lot.

IN HIS youth Robert Smith entertained that romantic delusion best loved by the twentieth century boy: that by the time he was 25 he would be dead.

Now lurking on the far side of 26, he recounts the failure of this ambition with, presumably, still the same drama queen sensibility that originally inspired such an inefficient life plan.

"After my 25th birthday I realized that I hadn't made it to oblivion and that's when I really cheered up. I've been quite cheerful recently, really."

Smith is a mildly adolescent 26 year-old. His life, he says, has probably been a process of growing down rather than growing up. As the driving force behind The Cure he's emerged from a phase of post-punk nihilistic morbidity into a time of post-post-punk "cheering up".

Even after a mid-summer tour in Italy, Robert Smith's face is chalky-white, peering out of a mess of black hair, lips still unnaturally pink around the edges from the morning's lipstick. He talks quietly, rarely looking directly at you, with the occasional hint of a stammer.

IN THOSE death-wish days when he was "much, much sadder", Smith had been a troublesome Crawley schoolboy expelled for having the wrong attitude, which he supposes was the logical end to his schooling. And with the exception of his more positive outlook on life, he reckons he's much the same as that boy still. "Except not as thin... People who I've known for that length of time don't think I've changed much. I don't think I've changed overly much. I would have thought that if I'd been doing this for this length of time I'd have become weary, but I haven't at all. In fact it's had the opposite effect on me."

It's ten years now since the first stirrings of the group, then The Easy Cure, a musical co-operative of schoolfriends. Despite an almost continually unstable line-up, they've now reached a total of thirteen singles, and the eighth LP, *The Head On The Door*, is now being unleashed on the world. And still Smith seems to be enjoying it more. He's currently concerned with evolving a more efficient hedonism.

"My worst habit is this," he says, lifting a glass of diminishing lager.

Do you drink to excess?

"Yes."

Do you drink till you fall over?

"Yep. In fact I think I've fallen over just about every day this year. Your life is composed of habits, but there's nothing now that I would want to stop. I've stopped most of the things that I thought were getting in the way of my enjoying myself."

The cigarettes disappeared last December. But drugs? The time when Robert joined the Banshees and formed The Glove with Steve Severin appeared to be a particularly

hallucinogenically inspired phase.

"I don't take them any more."

Is that the truth or are you lying?

"It is true, yeah. I stopped because they get in the way. The Glove thing particularly was me and Severin taking the piss out of ourselves or each other depending on our mood. There's always a lot of drugs around. A lot of the time it's really boring. It's like, if you go out drinking with the wrong people it's really boring, but if you go out drinking with the right people it's really good fun. It's the same with drugs."

"I'd never allow anyone I had to deal with on a personal level to get involved with drugs. I couldn't really be bothered because people do get really boring. It doesn't matter what the drug is, people do. When you get dependent on them, however much, you get really dull because you think that you're more exciting when you're taking drugs and that's a bit of a myth." He pauses. "But having said all that, they *are* good fun."

With a slight twitching of the lip, Robert Smith declares that he is a very irresponsible person. The only exception to this behaviour is when he's wearing his Robert-Smith-talks-to-the-record-company hat. For the rest, though, "it's a lot more fun to be irresponsible."

"Not in, like, a tantrum way. Although it would be easy to do that. Occasionally I do fall into that way of screaming and shouting and stamping my feet, but only because people expect it — they don't take any notice of what you say. I'm in the position where I'm earning money for a lot of other people so obviously people are very keen to keep me happy. Which is why I sometimes have to throw tantrums."

I understand they refer to you as 'fat Bob' at Polydor.

"That comes from Chris Mason, the radio promotions bloke." Smith doesn't bat an eyelid. "He's like Lol's best friend (*Lol Tolhurst — the other surviving founder of The Cure*). It has nothing to do with the people from Polydor. It was originally from Sioux, 'cos I used to call her 'Janet the old witch' in interviews."

"The first one she wanted to stick on me was 'The Pillsbury Dough Boy' but it was too long so she just called me 'fat Bob'. Quite a few people call me that. Tim Pope calls me that. The people at Polydor don't *address* me in that manner, but I know they refer to me as 'fat Bob'."

"It doesn't worry me at all. The last five days I've spent in Italy eating spaghetti so I'm at the peak of my fatness, really. I fluctuate in stones in my bodyweight, it really depends on how much I eat, how much I drink and the weather. I get thinner as it gets colder because I overcompensate for heat by drinking more..."

"There *are* fatter people. Lol for instance. Russell Grant. Is he referred to as 'fat Bob'? No!"

The lipstick smudge grins from under the backcombed and sprayed hair. I suggest to him that really he's just an old punk.



"Fuck off! No I don't think we were *ever* punk, in that we never played the part. But some people have retained certain ideals. It's not really *punk*, it's just an idea of youth or vitality which I still find attractive. Even though we're an older generation there's still a percentage of people who do something interesting, even people like Elvis Costello, The Stranglers, and the Bunnymen..."

"I think that over the past 20 or 30 years each generation has got worse. I certainly wouldn't like to be young now. I think that the advent of the middle school has had a drastic effect on the youth of Britain. That and the Conservative government. I don't hold out much hope for the generation that's going to be 16 in two years' time. We'll all be fuckin' dead by then."

Do you have any politics?

"I get involved personally quite a lot, but I never use the group as a mouthpiece for politics, mainly because we don't agree and I don't see why I should lumber everyone else with what I believe in. I certainly disagree with Lol on quite a few social and political issues. He's much more of a *fascist* than I am, contrary to what everyone believes."

The effect of Robert Smith "cheering up" and abandoning what he flippantly calls the "gloomy period" spills fetchingly over into the songs. Lush love songs like *In Between Days* follow on from a renewed interest in amateurish pop which started with *Let's Go To Bed* and grew through *The Lovecats*. He is, he admits unblushingly, a man who has fallen in love only once. Mary, his longstanding girlfriend, has been a part of his life for almost as long as The Cure.

Sioux once said that anyone who writes a song called *The Lovecats* has got to be a bit soft. Is this true?

"Nah! *She* can talk. *She* thinks she's a cat."

Are you a whimsical creature?

"Part of me is, I suppose. Part of me has childish romantic views still, but they're there on purpose because you can't be completely cynical. Although I used to be."

As affable and dilettanteish a fellow as anyone could wish to meet, Robert Smith. If he wasn't a pop star, people would probably call him a slob, but as someone or other once said, it takes a pig to find the truffles. Failing that for an epitaph, would Smith like to compose his own?

"Oh no. I'm not *that* much of a drama queen yet."

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● **DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN**

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● **A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET**

● **DIM SUM**



DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN

● **Directed by Susan Seidelman.**
Rosanna Arquette, Madonna, Aidan Quinn, Mark Blum.

As idle daydreams come and go, trading places with a stranger offers considerable dramatic possibilities. In fact precisely those that are lacking in the life of Roberta (Susan Arquette): married to one of those Yuppie types (Mark Blum) that we've read about, killing time at the hairdresser's, following the ads in the personal columns that read 'Desperately Seeking Susan'.

The sought Susan places an ad of her own, stating time and place, which

is noted by Roberta, who turns up to observe Susan meeting occasional boyfriend, Jim, a piece of low-life rock musicianship resembling a cuddlier version of Richard Hell (who also has a bit-part), about to leave town for a few gigs. Roberta follows Susan. Contrast Susan's street-wise swank with Robert's uncertainty.

Susan trades in her customised jacket; Roberta buys it. Finds key in pocket. Key fits station locker containing Susan's effects. Roberta places ad to arrange return of same. Ad observed by another interested party, who has followed Susan from Atlantic City where she has blown out a high-roller, taking money and a priceless pair of Egyptian earrings (stolen). Interested party has blown away same high-roller

and is now in pursuit of said earrings. Ad also noted by out-of-town Jim, who sends cinema-projectionist buddy Dez (Aidan Quinn) to look after Susan. Rendezvous misfires. A scuffle. Killer foiled. Roberta bumps head. Amnesia. Dez takes Roberta for the Susan he has never met...

Phew! Suffice to say that a series of outrageous contrivances and coincidences are needed to set the plot in motion. This takes some creaky time, but when the movie gets going it gathers the momentum of deftly-directed farce. Rosanna Arquette you may remember from the excellent *Baby, It's You*, and *Desperately Seeking Susan* pitches in somewhere between that and *Liquid Sky*; though without the former's bitter critique of Class as



People like her are changing to Number Six. (Desperately Seeking Susan).

site of tragedy, and the latter's savage mischief-making amongst New York's art-music underground.

So what has it got? Madonna, obviously, as Susan. Or as 'herself' — a role she has been playing for some time now, and indeed is very good at. Roberta, meanwhile, becomes a mixture of Madonna's clothes, Dez's assumptions — and growing affections — and her amnesia-freed desires. Naturally, she is unaware of the signals her new surface sends out — she makes herself up as she goes along — which makes for some fun around the malleability of Identity.

Social satire? Not really. The low-lifers are just too cute and Gary Yuppie

too clueless. But happily, discursive themes don't drag on the forward motion of a narrative — a multi-story chase — that heads towards a quite delirious denouement. Though one with a keen eye for detail along the way. Its box-office success in America — already grossing over five times its \$5 million budget — may well have a lot to do with the presence of Madonna; and, it must be said, *presence* Madonna certainly has. But this fast-moving vehicle is not for her alone. Susan Seidelman has managed the rare trick, or treat, rather, of directing an undemanding yet engaging good time that's as deep as you like it.

Mark Cordery



RAMBO

One of the more sensitive and moving scenes from Rambo.

●Directed by George P. Cosmatos. Sylvester Stallone, Richard Crenna, Julie Nickson, Steven Berkoff.

This follow-up to *First Blood* has already made truly frightening amounts of money in America and will no doubt do the same here. That may seem a supercilious remark, especially when so many are doing so much under the British Film Year banner to entice people back into the cinema, but if one may make the assumption that a film's success on this scale faithfully reflects popular taste then receipts for *Rambo*, which have passed the \$125 million mark, betray our bloodthirsty predilection for extreme barbarism.

Sylvester Stallone reprises the role of John Rambo, psychopath and folk-hero, who here is called upon to return to 'Nam on a simple reconnaissance mission to ascertain whether American P.O.W.'s are being detained. Never a great one for orders, Rambo bursts out of his fatigues and assiduously sets about the enemy with both pectorals blazing.

Stallone allegedly took no part in the Vietnam war, as his full complement of highly impressive limbs would tend to substantiate. He is clearly nobody's fool. Why he lent his services to this piece of xenophobic propaganda is therefore anyone's guess. He might, of course, cite the film's political content on the strength of a trite last line with which Rambo asks America to love its Vietnam veterans "as much as we love

it". Certainly the film's US release was cannily timed to cash in on renewed Vietnam awareness surrounding the recent overdue celebrations to mark the tenth anniversary of the war's end.

However, if there are men still being held in Vietnam, and evidence exists to support this claim, this is surely an invidious manner in which to plead their case. The sketching here of the Vietnamese and the Russians as malevolent caricatures encourages an unhealthy form of emotional blood-letting and fosters prejudice. If the droves of Americans who saw *Rambo* actually subscribe to the idea of some forlorn military rescue operation then the lesson of the war has been quickly forgotten.

In this country, missing the pertinence of Vietnam, the film's success will merely exemplify the more general social malaise which renders violence ever more commonplace and acceptable. Rambo, having slipped his leash, sees off hordes of Commies with anything that comes to hand, including an inexhaustible arsenal which would unquestionably have sunk the boat in which he arrived. These killings form the substance of the film. That the screenplay is credited to all signals epic generosity, but the wholesale nemesis it advocates should appal you. The fortune *Rambo* has earned means it cannot be cast aside, but the cinematic and social tendency it represents is a highly disturbing one.

Mark Brennan

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Jamie Lee Curtis gets into some chairbics.

PERFECT

●Directed by James Bridges. John Travolta, Jamie Lee Curtis, Jann Wenner.

Perfect marks the reunion of John Travolta, director James Bridges and scriptwriter Aaron Latham, who last collaborated on the disappointing *Urban Cowboy*. That film was based on an article Latham had written for *Esquire* magazine — this time the starting point is a cover story he wrote for *Rolling Stone* in June 1983 entitled 'Looking For Mr Goodbody', which explored the view that health clubs have become the singles bars of the eighties.

Travolta plays a *Rolling Stone* reporter engaged on what he at first assumes will be a straightforward satirical exposé of the health club scene. However, spending time researching at LA's Sports Connection, he becomes romantically involved with the club's leading aerobics instructor (Jamie Lee Curtis). It's not the sort of behaviour one normally associates

with journalistic objectivity, of course, but the sight of Curtis in a leotard would probably be enough to make even Bernard Levin think twice.

Anyway... Curtis has been hurt once before by the press and she persuades Travolta to rewrite the first draft of his article, which is little more than a lascivious piece of sensationalism dealing mainly with the more athletic sexual antics of a couple of the club regulars. Instead he turns in a piece all about Emersonian self-reliance (if you're interested, Latham's original article was a cross between the two). Unfortunately for Travolta and unbeknown to him, his editor (played by Jann Wenner, who is in fact the real-life editor and publisher of *Rolling Stone*) decides to junk these philosophical meanderings and publish instead something approaching the original piece, and dishing the dirt on Curtis at the same time. She is none too pleased. He is none too pleased. Somehow out of all of this a happy ending is stitched together.

It would be a mistake to take *Perfect* too seriously — the question of journalistic responsibility is little more than a good excuse for love, leotards and melodramatics. Nevertheless, one must question the participation of Wenner. Although his performance as the jovial, rotund editor is one of the best things about the film, the price of this undoubted boost to his ego is considerable — we are led to believe that his magazine has no sense of moral responsibility towards either its writers or its interview subjects. Cancel your subscription today.

Finally, an interesting footnote: Predictably, *Rolling Stone* asked John Travolta to reprise his screen role and write an article for them. The resulting piece was published recently and it's rumoured that Travolta's words of wisdom went through considerable changes at the sub-editor's desk before they reached the page. That's life imitating art imitating life. How many film reviews can offer you that?

Tim Hulse

THE ASSISI UNDERGROUND

●Ben Cross, James Mason, Irene Papas, Maximilian Schell.

In the summer of 1944 Alexander Ramati, a Polish war correspondent, witnessed the British liberation of Assisi from German occupation. On seeing hundreds of Jews emerge from private houses and from the numerous churches, monasteries and convents throughout the town he was moved to research and write the compassionate and heroic story of the Franciscan friar who operated the Assisi Underground to shelter refugees from persecution and death. The facts of this undertaking attest to the innate courage and goodness of men under constant threat, evinced by the many forms of resistance which grew under fascism. Despite this truth the film left me strangely unaffected. It suffers, I concluded, from what one might appropriately term, with St. Francis' forbearance, 'Cannonisation' (after the production company, Cannon), by which process even marauding Nazis seem of little consequence. Ben Cross, in particular, as the redoubtable Padre Ruffino, gives a performance approaching caricature, with his Italian accent and hands clasped firmly in front of him, praying for a new script. The film is also too episodic to offer any semblance of unity but I'm sure that in other hands it would have amounted to more than a cross between *The Sound of Music* and a Cornetto advert. Unlike a Cornetto, it just doesn't gel.

Mark Brennan

DIM SUM —

A LITTLE BIT OF HEART

●Lauren Chew, Kim Chew, Victor Wong. Set amidst San Francisco's Chinese community, this American independent depicts the conflict between traditional and modern values. Matriarchal Mrs Tam believes she is soon to die and in an attempt to tidy up the final loose thread of her life she resolves to persuade her reluctant daughter to marry her longtime boyfriend. There is a twist at the end. Possibly a very fine short film could have been hung around this idea, but strung out to feature length the pace becomes so slow that only the keenest student of human relationships could possibly retain interest. The long, lingering shot of a bird in a cage which forms a coda throughout the film becomes each time less of a metaphor and more a cinematic equivalent of counting sheep. *Dim Sum* is stunning in the very literal sense of the word.

Finn Hulse

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

●John Saxon, Ronee Blakley, Heather Langenkamp.

Middle class America's tree-lined suburban avenues with their profusion of well-maintained detached dwellings have proved fertile killing grounds for the modern horror movie. Carpenter's *Halloween*, with its prosperous neighbourhood high school brats chased by 'The Bogeyman' (cue rhyme chanted off-screen by precocious children), was of course the seminal classic of this genre. Since then we've had a plague of films which suggest that low budget horror film-makers love to taunt the American bourgeoisie's achievements in escaping *Inner City Hell*, by afflicting them with a horror that's more fantastic and less understandable. This brings us nicely to *A Nightmare On Elm Street*, which, like milk, has Got The Lot. The main protagonists are in high school, they live in nice houses and there is A Bogeyman... with a difference. This chap, you see, is dead, but that doesn't stop him haunting the dreams of four teenagers and affecting events on the material plane (i.e. he carves them up with his metal talons...). Director and scriptwriter Wes Craven (*The Hills Have Eyes*) is obviously a man with ideas. Despite its unintentionally farcical moments and the confusing cop-out of an ending, *Nightmare...* (being hailed in the US as the *Halloween* of the '80's) is well-paced pulp sprinkled with suspense.

Adrian Jones

GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN

● Sarah Jessica Parker, Lee Montgomery. Perhaps you should be warned that the FUN in question in this particular instance is of the squeaky-clean, mid-teen American variety. We're in sub-Fame territory here, 'cos sixteen-year-old Janey just loves to dance and her one ambition is to appear on Dance Television, "the nation's number one

music and dance TV show". To fulfill her dream, Janey must first triumph over her disciplinarian father and a wicked, scheming rival. Naturally this she does and manages to find true love with Jeff, her thicko partner, into the bargain. We are left to await *Girls Just Want To Have Fun II*, in which Janey develops a serious coke problem and begins to have doubts about her sexuality.

Tim Hulse



BREWSTER'S MILLIONS

● Richard Pryor, John Candy, Lonette McKee.

It's sad to relate that while *Beverly Hills Cop*, for all its faults, is decisive proof that Eddie Murphy can successfully transfer his comic talent from the stage to Hollywood, *Brewster's Millions* is merely further evidence that Richard Pryor just doesn't seem able to cut it in a leading comedy role. There's no small irony in the fact that Walter Hill, who launched Murphy's film career in the excellent *48 Hours*, also takes the director's credit in this limp reworking of one

of the big screen's more overused titles (this is now the seventh version). Pryor plays a minor league baseball player who must spend 30 million dollars in 30 days in order to inherit 300 million dollars. Laughs are few and far between as he takes conspicuous consumption by the horns, although a novel twist is added to the old formula when Pryor hits on the idea of an election campaign as a way of squandering large amounts of money. Despite the fact that disbelief must be well and truly suspended for a fantasy like this, the ending, as the final seconds tick away, still appears hideously contrived. Disappointing.

Tim Hulse



TURK 182

● Timothy Hutton, Robert Urich, Peter Boyle.

With all due respect to Matt Wotsisname (see feature, etc.), it's this writer's humble opinion that Timothy Hutton is the best of the current crop of young American actors. And with *Turk 182* he's found a good, old-fashioned populist movie to move his

reputation along just a little further. Hutton is the younger brother of a New York fireman who is unfairly dismissed from service after an act of bravery which leaves him seriously injured. Spurred into action, the young whippersnapper mounts a one-man campaign to discredit the mayor (who has ignored his pleas for help) during his re-election campaign. He leaves his message, usually in graffiti, in the most unlikely of places and in the biggest possible way, leaving the callsign 'Turk 182' (for reasons we won't bother to go into). Along the way, Hutton exhibits a natty line in shirts and comes up against an impressively evil Peter Boyle. None of it means very much, of course, but the whole is nicely paced by director Bob Clark and adds up to a very satisfying little piece of entertainment. Shame there aren't more like this one.

Tim Hulse



FRIDAY THE 13TH — A NEW BEGINNING

● John Shepherd, Shaver Ross, Melanie Kinnaman.

After *The Final Chapter* comes *A New Beginning*. The *Friday The 13th* movies (this is the fifth) keep on popping up with the same grim inevitability as the lumbering, masked psychopath whose trail of destruction they document. Since the story never changes, each new episode must distinguish itself by finding ever more

ingenious methods by which our hero does away with his victims (usually female, well-formed and in a state of semi-undress). Thus the ignited flare rammed down the throat of an unsuspecting young hoodlum must represent a new highpoint here. Perverts and amateur psychologists should note that this film includes one scene in which a terrified girl with wet hair and a transparent blouse wields a chainsaw at her attacker. The ending leaves no doubt that a sequel will not be long in coming. You have been warned.

Tim Hulse



Anthony Perkins contemplates the sins of the flesh in *Crimes of Passion*.

CRIMES OF PASSION

● Directed by Ken Russell. Kathleen Turner, Anthony Perkins, John Laughlin.

I don't know whether the version we'll be seeing of *Crimes Of Passion* is complete, but I find it hard to believe that the Censor didn't at least balk at the frank way in which Ken Russell's film addresses the themes of marriage, sex and eroticism.

The tone is very abruptly set. In fact, the audience with whom I shared this bludgeoning experience was swiftly mesmerised by the language and visual candour of the opening scenes. This state of shock subsided into a few nervous giggles before the director eventually allowed us to give some logic to the bizarre events unfolding on the screen. Writer Barry Sandler claims to have based the story on observation of his own friends' relationships. If this is true there is more than ample evidence to prosecute or commit most of them.

Crimes Of Passion is an uncomfortable hybrid of the horror, sex and romance genres. The principals are a troubled threesome whose unifying characteristic is the desire to escape. Bobby Grady (John Laughlin) is a gentle, ingenuous boy-scout of a man.

Industrious, giving, a dedicated husband and father, he comes to realise quite suddenly that in marital terms he has been getting the short end of the stick. Severe penury induces him to take some part-time investigative work and he is assigned to shadow one Joanna Crane

(Kathleen Turner), whose employer suspects her of industrial theft. Larceny, it turns out, is not her game. Her game, under the tacky pseudonym of China Blue, is THE game, and Grady finds himself irresistibly drawn to both the refuge and the passion she represents.

Hovering on the sidelines, however, is the Rev. Peter Shayne (Anthony Perkins), who we know instinctively is going to kick up a stink at some point. Shayne trails and harasses China Blue, recognising in her sad figure the same restlessness, evasion and troubled spirit that enticed Grady. This is a brilliantly arch performance from Perkins. The switches in mood he achieves so effortlessly, slipping from biblical rhetoric into awful, demented profanity, serve to heighten the portentous tone most effectively.

Perkins is just one of a number of good things about the film. The director's deft handling of pace, especially, ensures that the climax is eagerly awaited and does not disappoint. Also, the lurid neon, the squalor and the seediness of the red-light district are so precisely and extravagantly created as to be almost tangible.

Nevertheless I can't help feeling that *Crimes Of Passion* is trying to be something it patently isn't. Certainly it gives an airing to our darker sexual inclinations but, in essence, the film makes a simple reactionary plea for honesty in relationships. Bunuel's *Belle De Jour* confronted most of these themes nearly twenty years ago and at far less hysterical pitch. Mark Brennan

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50

● Interview by William Shaw
● Photographs by Peter Moss

WHERE five words will do Marc Almond uses fifty. Like this: "I've learnt," he announces, "to have more fun. To enjoy myself. To enjoy myself more, to have more fun and generally to relax a lot more. I'm basically less self-destructive because I have matured. I've grown up a bit probably, as we all do. As everybody does."

Contorting himself on one of those immense sofas which are an inevitable part of the media office furniture and on which it's always impossible to sit upright, Marc Almond is talking about the growing pains of Marc Almond. There's a stream of words interspersed with short strident bursts of laughter, but it's not always easy to see where the pains start and where the amateur dramatics stop. ▶



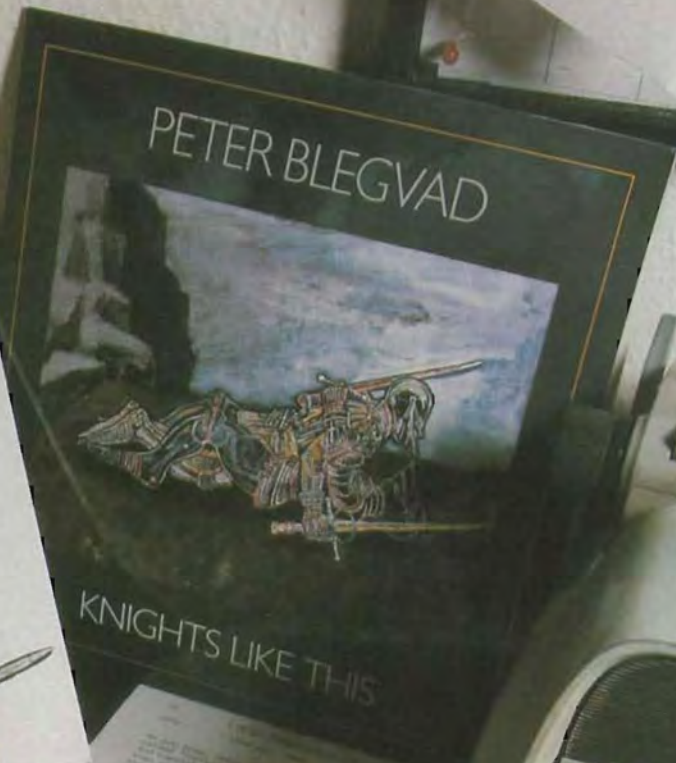


PETER BLEGVAD - KNIGHTS LIKE THIS

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IT WAS in 1981, during that strange summer of inner-city rioting, that an odd couple appeared on Top Of The Pops one Thursday evening. A shambling, aggressive-looking type lurked behind a keyboard while a small, black-clad, fish-eyed man clenched a microphone in one hand and waved the other around nervously. Their song was a cover of a Gloria Jones northern soul classic, the new version drawing out to the full the heavy sexual double entendre of the original. In amongst all the prevailing prissy futurism of the time, it was something of a relief.

Marc Almond doesn't like *Tainted Love* at all. To him it represents everything that has held him back or has drawn him in the wrong direction. "In a couple of years I'll probably be able to look more objectively at it and be able to enjoy it, once I get far enough away from it. Probable as a piece of kitsch or something. It was one of our more throwaway moments.

"I'm grateful to it because it opened so many doors, in one way, yet closed so many others in another. So it doesn't hold very fond memories for me at all. It's one of the reasons why when we went out to play live we never did it — because neither of us could stand to play it."

ONE DAY somebody's going to write a great book about the influence of art schools on British pop. Wave after wave of graduates and drop outs have launched into the music whirl clutching their artistic pretensions. George Melly pointed this out somewhere far back in the sixties in his book *Revolt Into Style*. "Art schools," he wrote, "provided an atmosphere committed to no practical end. They were incubators of total pop."

Marc Almond is a typical case. He left for Leeds Poly from Southport. He'd been a shy, asthmatic boy — "a sickly child, I suppose" — who'd spent long hours helping out at the local theatre, operating the follow spot, or looking after Tom O'Connor by making sure he had a backstage drink ready. Hanging around with the camp theatrical types.

"Art school was my escape from home. It was great to go there and get away from Southport. It was such a restricting place and I just needed to get away. In a few years there I learnt more than I had in nine years at school. I was young... I was just so inhibited and suddenly the cork was let out of the bottle and this monster was let out."

He's remembered as a man whose loud giggles and shrieks of laughter preceded him — a short undergraduate dressed in tight leather trousers, belts slung low around the waist and a leopard skin T-shirt. In those days he used to hang around with an intimate friend by the name of Alan Selka, a fellow student who was obsessed by Hitler and the lunatic King Ludwig III of Bavaria. Alan cropped up again last year as one of the stars of the Surrealist Ball.

Like other art students, Almond pissed about: at performances he'd indulge in esoteric acts such as smearing himself with catfood. "Yes," he recalls, "I don't know why people remember that. It wasn't even particularly exciting. You do these things in the name of art and think afterwards 'why did I do that?'"



It's all part of the process of learning; you have to do these things and make a fool of yourself."

Meanwhile he was also experimenting with the prototype Soft Cell. The post punk generation played with synthesizers in bedrooms, and Marc and Dave Ball were no exception. They recorded and released their debut, *Mutant Moments*.

"A real bedroom effort. It's quite nostalgic in a way. Our first little EP that we pressed ourselves and recorded in Dave's bedroom. It actually goes for a fortune now..."

It was these bedroom tapes that brought them to the attention of Stevo, the hyperactive loudmouth enthusiast who was later to set up Some Bizzare. The two met up in London ("This person came in drenched from the rain and wearing a sort of tatty military jacket and I thought, 'My God!' And he proceeded to tell me his plans for world domination."). And then all of a sudden there was *Tainted Love*...

Churlish ingrate he may be, but Almond has always resented this sudden uprooting from the seclusion of art school eccentricity into the glitzy world of the charts.

"It was all too easy," he complains. "It all came so quickly and there was no real earning it. Success got to us and made us both unhappy in various ways. We had no time to build as a group so those early interviews are so embarrassing 'cos it was like two little kids getting out of junior school."

SEX. At the time, seeing this leather-clad, made-up sex dwarf who couldn't resist an innuendo sparked some of the more fervent sexual imaginations. Rumours spread. Tales of Almond's feats of promiscuity went the rounds, ridiculously fallacious stories like how he'd been hospitalised as the result of some particular sexual misadventure or other.

Marc laughs his head off at the very mention. "I don't know how they get out. How do they get to the public?"

"I should say that I was very promiscuous at one time. Very promiscuous. I've settled down now because I've found steady relationships."

"Yes, I was incredibly promiscuous but nothing like in the way of some of the stories I heard. Some of the stories I heard were completely unbelievable. And also physically impossible as well."

"There were points of naivety and things that I should have been a lot more grown up about. But it's a world that I've grown to dislike greatly in the past few years, basically because everyone and their mother does it, with all these bands doing sleazy ►

ORIGINAL
SINNER

Marc Almond
**ORIGINAL
SINNER**

stuff and sleazy songs. It's all so *dull*. I think it's so incredibly boring."

When it comes to his own sexuality, Almond has always skirted coyly around the issue.

"I've never stood on my soap box because I find it quite unimportant. I've never found people's sexuality important. I've never looked on people as being gay or straight or bisexual or whatever. As I've always been wary of heterosexuals who stand up and go on about heterosexuality so I've always thought the same the other way as well. People can do what they want with their own lives, but for me it is unimportant. It doesn't matter to me what people do in their own rooms."

In its favour, Marc Almond will say of *Tainted Love* that it was "an antithesis to the very bland thing. A great wart in the middle of it all." A string of hits followed, all top five, all of them, he finds himself saying, "attempts to unlock that door to a bit more artistic credibility."

Almond's growing frustration with Soft Cell took a step further when he came across a quiet piano player by the name of Annie Hogan, who was then a Leeds University refugee DJ-ing in local clubs. She was to become the lynchpin of first The Mambas and then The Willing Sinners. She remains one of his closest friends. "An enduring friendship," agrees Marc. "Enduring, I think, is the perfect choice of word. Unfortunately because she's one of my closest friends she ends up in the firing line when I'm screaming."

The crowning glory of The Mambas' output was the *Torment And Toreros* LP, hispanically tinged and well and truly over the top. A spanner being thrown in the works.

"Oh definitely. I'm very self-destructive in that way. It's like you always have to build it up to knock it down. I think that I was so tense and so pent up.

"I hate the *shallowness* of pop. I hate the reasons why pop should have to be such a shallow thing. It doesn't have to be. It's made me so angry all the time. I spent a couple of years being continually *angry* and *depressed* and *annoyed*.

"Torment And Toreros was written at a time when I was incredibly confused, incredibly miserable and almost content to wallow in misery, but it proved in the end to be the light at the end of the tunnel. Those exorcisms on vinyl – I really had to put all that down. It needed to be very indulgent in a way. It had to be extreme."

Some people liked it. Some people hated it. Marc Almond stormed into the Record Mirror offices brandishing a bullwhip to berate Jim Reid for a bad review. Some record chains refused to stock it because of the abundance of four-letter words. Almond began to announce his intention to leave Soft Cell.

KEYWORDS and clichés for Marc Almond. How does he react to the following oft-used adjectives?

Spoilt.

"I think I have a reputation for being somewhat temperamental. A lot of sections of the media like this image of me stamping my foot and screaming hysterically and tearing my hair out in the great Tallulah Bankhead fashion.

"The only thing is that I don't like to suffer fools ►







and I like to put my work over in the best way that I can. If I think that someone's short-changing me then I'll scream and shout. Sometimes you're driven to moodiness out of frustration. Sometimes when things are out of your reach and you so much want to do them you blow your top and tear your hair out. It's a relief. I don't go behind people's backs and do horrible sneaky things."

Confused.

"I think definitely confused. Who isn't? There's so much to be confused about. I have a much clearer direction now. I used to be so confused."

Sleazy.

"Sleaze is a word that I was very naive about and played with wrongly in a lot of ways. It's a very flippant word. It was also the name of a loose jam record that we (*the Mambas*) brought out as a fan club 12". It's been used in a tits and bums way, which is not what I'm about at all."

Tortured.

Almond laughs his head off at that one: "Oh no! What can I say? What do you expect me to say to things like that? Tortured? Yeah, definitely."

Camp.

"It's one of those words where no-one really knows what it means. I don't think what I do is camp."

"I think it's the sort of people I hang around with. I spent a lot of time hanging around with theatrical people and I think that rubs off from working in the theatre. Whenever I think of myself I actually think of myself as being pretty *butch*, really," Marc laughs, wide eyed and rubs the skull ring on his left hand.

NO OTHER record company can compete with Some Bizzare for the number of long-suffering fans prepared to hang around outside all day. O'Dowd's fans may come and go, but Almond's are there even at times when his public profile has shrunk to almost nothing. Today there's a small crowd of German fans, and a sixteen year-old schoolgirl dressed in black and wearing a crucifix. Her name is Carol and she's taken the day off and travelled to London for the occasion. She's hoping to join the official Gutterhearts fan club when she gets £5.00 to spend on the membership fee.

"Everybody's obsessed with him," she says. "I'm obsessed with him. People find it weird, though. Marc's not exactly charts."

"When I heard Tainted Love I thought he was lovely. I went off him with *Where The Heart Is...*" She stops in mid-flow. "Hang on a sec!"

Marc has just emerged from the office. He's making for a nearby car. "Hello," he says from behind a pair of dark glasses and opens the car door explaining that he's sorry but he's in a hurry. Carol stands near the car while photographs are taken.

She returns after the car has gone to casually pick up the thread of the conversation. "I thought that the first time I met him I'd start screaming, but I was stuck for words. I was just totally... I saw him, he saw me, I said hello. That's it."

Sometimes, Carol admits, he gets pissed off with it. There was one time which has gone down in Gutterheart lore when Marc was supposed to have told one girl to fuck off, otherwise he'd pull her hair. "I don't blame him," adds Carol.

A day later, Marc ponders this extraordinary loyalty. "I think it's because I give loyalty in return. I think loyalty's quite important," he decides.

"Those people outside come to see each other just as much as they come to see me. But I'm very grateful to have that loyalty. I've not been the easiest person to follow. Even though they've not liked everything I've done, they've *tried* to."

"It's an insecurity, I think, because I'm quite an insecure person. I've always been quite insecure. I probably attract the insecure people in my band, in my friends, in the fans. The great conglomeration of insecure people that need each other for security!" He giggles at the thought. "I think that we should all be put away in a home."

On the other side of it, Marc Almond is one of the most reviled of pop stars. Many people utterly detest him. "Yeah," he laughs. "I suppose because I've laid myself on the line a bit too much. I'm not afraid to say what I feel. I suppose in as much as I inspire loyalty, you always have the opposite effect too."

"Also," he says with more than a hint of pride, "I've never really fitted into the whole pop business. I never go to the pop parties and stand next to pop personalities to have my photograph taken, or do the sort of things that I'm meant to do to be trendy. The unfortunate fact is that I despise most pop stars. That's the sad truth. I see it all and I go YEUCH!"

MARC Almond's been having his horoscope done by a friend who's an expert in these matters. He says it's helped him to find out what he wants to do. He answers the raised eyebrows: "I think it's helped me a lot, not in an ethereal, silly way. It's just helped in giving me the confidence which I lacked so badly all along."

"People would scoff and say rubbish. Whether it's like truth or not doesn't matter. I think it gives me quite a lot of confidence."

Twenty-eight is a good enough age at which to have these things sorted out. The new LP, *Stories of Johnny*, reflects this new confidence, he says. "I'm a lot less histrionic on it, a lot less overindulgent. It just shows a lot more maturity. It's my most commercial record yet."

He stops himself. "Commercial. I *hate* that word." ●



SPACEMONKEY

“Those days when the sons of the gods had intercourse
with the daughters of men, and got children by them, The
Nephilim (giants) were on earth. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.”
GENESIS 6-4.

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so, too, is the question of the risk incurred by sovereign borrowers. It is important to put this question into context. There are good reasons why banks should wish to lend to governments, private corporations and banks in other countries, in the same way as they do to any other customer. In some cases we have relationships going back over many years involving trade finance. Often, too, lendings have resulted from the support of major export projects, whether from the United Kingdom or other countries in which we operate.

The finance required for major projects has also become larger – for instance equipping an airline with a new Jumbo jet and its spares costs £45 million and the 250,000-ton tankers now in service cost some £40 million. It is clear that the world is becoming a riskier place.

It is ever important that we maintain a clear view of risk and that we are able to assess it. This is the

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UPTOWN GOES DOWNTOWN

All we ever read in foreign fashion journals is how bright and innovative London's young designers are. Hearing this a few times too many, BLITZ decided to put their creativity to the test. A sackful of clothes sideswiped from the

● LEIGH BOWERY

Given: harlequin pants and top by STARK REALISM

I'm sorry, I racked my brains trying to make these garments look interesting, something I'd be seen in, but no matter what I came up with, from making the trousers into a peculiar turban to knotting the two together to create a crafty little handbag, NOTHING WORKED! I was at my wit's end, then it struck me — don't use them at all, just dress the model in something he feels comfortable in, slip the problem into the unfocused background as obscure details . . . Problem solved.



● JOHN GALLIANO

Given: an assortment of skirts and tops by QUEST

I approached the items I was given with a childlike eye, a naive way of thinking. I put things on the model upside down, turned shirts into skirts, jackets became trousers and vice versa.



● RICHMOND-CORNEJO

Given: boxer shorts from AGAINST NATURE

DESPERATE MEASURES. What do you do with last year's boxer shorts? Apply the principle of 3D: DESTROY. DISORIENTATE. DISORDER. Cut the crutch, turn upside down, juxtapose with lycra, pinstripe, motorcycle boots. A look full of opposites: hard and soft, masculine and feminine, blatant and sexual. This year's boxer shorts.

boots from Lewis Leathers leggings by Frederick Freed gloves from Expectations braces from Bunkaya lip accessory from LEI magazine (a free gift)



● BODYMAP

Given: pale yellow pumps by OFFICE SHOES

To heighten one's walking experience, gather all your old flip-flops from all your past summers. Remove the uppers . . . and stick the lowers together to tier the soles to the highest elevation. Decorate them gaily with frill insertions.

Hide the cracks in the flip-flop stack with sellotape and high-gloss paint. Sew bows on the front and accessorise with your favourite socks/stockings/flare. Take the dog for a walk in the field — SKIM THAT GRASS AND WALK TALL.



● STEPHEN JONES

Given: Pale pink wig from AU SUZY

It's difficult to know what to do when you're handed a pink wig and asked to be creative with it. I treated this as a hat — hair is just . . . Vidal Sassoon, and with some of the more complicated creations it would be easier to just wear a hat. After all, it doesn't fall apart so quickly. The idea behind this was inspired by an episode of The Flintstones . . . Wilma Flintstone comes to London and goes out on the town.



● BERNSTOCK-SPEIRS

Given: black net dress from PRISM

That Old Black Magic . . . Whilst searching the north country for exotic fabrics we stopped overnight. During the evening we came upon a gypsy encampment where we were immediately enchanted by a dirty gypsy girl who was spinning wildly about the fire. We beckoned her over to us, and discovered that she was oblivious to her own natural elegance, and to Cafe Society. She agreed to return with us as our muse for the following season. She spun magic from her fingers, and delighted us daily with her delirious singing voice. We would never part with our gypsy princess . . .

bowler, raincoat, pants, glove from Bernstock-Speirs Shotgun Dressing



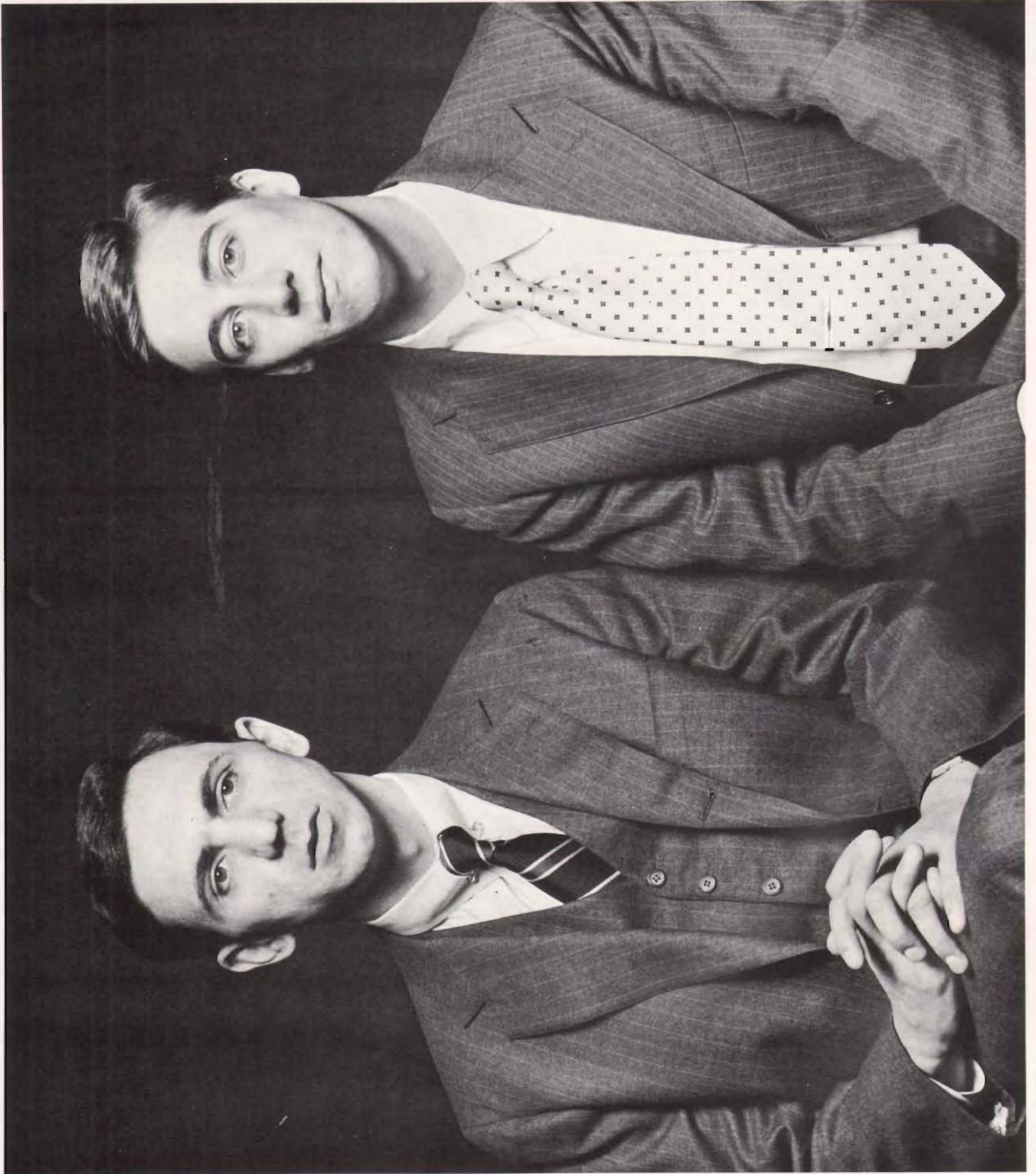
racks at HYPER-HYPER in Kensington High Street was dumped on my desk, and duly distributed amongst the rabble who have become known as the leading names during Fashion Week.

BODYMAP. JOHN GALLIANO. STEPHEN JONES. BERNSTOCK-SPEIRS. RICHMOND-CORNEJO. LEIGH BOWERY.

'Style it yourselves!' was their only directive. Amidst moans and groans, the originality and humour (which have become synonymous with British Fashion) indeed surfaced and proved once again that London is still worth raving about. RAVE ON!





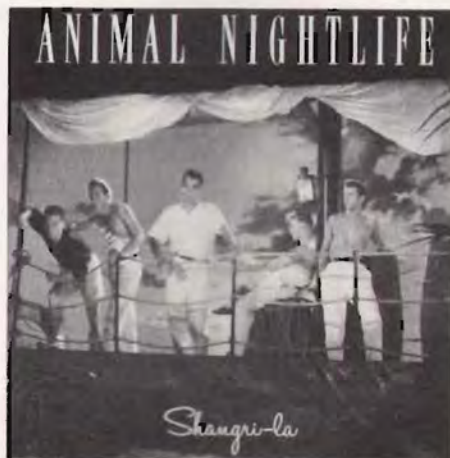












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SLY 'N' ROBBIE Interview by Marc Issue ● Photograph by Mark Collicott

BREAKING THE LANGUAGE

GERBARRIER





In the space of the last ten years, Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare have achieved the magical crossover from being Jamaica's hardest-working rhythm section to being the music industry's most in-demand session musicians, with a pedigree that includes albums by Mick Jagger, Bob Dylan and Yoko Ono amongst others.

But has their creative output suffered as a result?

NOW, YOU have all heard of Sly and Robbie. You have also heard probably only a tiny fraction of their recorded works, as have we all. For most of the past decade, S&R have been widely considered the greatest rhythm section in reggae, and therefore serious contenders as the most formidable dance unit in the world. They certainly have no exact parallel in pop music — no-one has ever dominated rock'n'roll, for example, in the way these two have dominated reggae. No-one knows how many records they have graced with their inimitable presence. Not even they know. They are unsure what the first session they played on together was, although it was probably at Channel One studios towards the other end of the seventies. No, they said, they hadn't the remotest idea how many sessions they had done together. They found the question quite hilarious. And did they always recognise themselves on records they heard?

Sly: "Yeah!"

What, always?

S: "Uh huh!"

We haven't come here today, however, just to talk about reggae. The occasion of this interview is the release of a 'solo' album by the dynamic duo, entitled *Language Barrier*, which is a clear indication of their position in the great scheme of things at this point in time. Sly and Robbie, in case you didn't realise already, have joined the celestial band of gold-plated international musos. And *Language Barrier* is just the sort of dodgy celebration of that fact that you might expect it to be.

Coming the purist will do us no good at all here. Were we to approach this album from the point of view of the diehard Taxi-gang-Sly-and-Robbie devotee, we might feel more or less as if George Lucas and Steven Spielberg had landed one of their monstrous Battlestars in our allotment. Of course it would look pretty impressive — like something off another planet, in fact — but hey, mister, we put a lot of work into that cabbage patch... you know what I mean? There is, well, a language barrier at work here.

Were we to approach this album as if — just supposing! — as if it were the initiation ceremony of two good old boys into some kind of global celebrity knees-up, then it begins to make a bit more sense, because it fits the facts. We can hear the traces of Sly and Robbie's recent past — their accession to the (American) Big Time via their Grace Jones albums, and with the first two Gwen Guthrie albums. Then we have the shy, retiring Bill Laswell to consider — you have to hand it to that man. He must have a lot of nerve bringing his DMX along to a Sly and Robbie party. It must take no small amount of front to pull that one off with a straight face. And then there's the rest of the Shango axis — Bernie Worrell, Afrika Bambaataa, Wally Badarou... and then, by way of excess (I can think of no other word for it) we have yer Bob Dylan with his harmonica, yer Doug E. Fresh and his Human Beatbox freakshow, and yer Herbie Hancock keyboards and yer Manu Dibango saxophones and yer Daniel Ponce percussion, and yer Eddie Martinez guitars... you get the picture? If a thing is worth doing, they say, then it's worth *overdoing*.

All this would be of no account if the result was utterly unmissable, but... it isn't. It's a celebrity jam, a spirited bid for mainstream radio play, and a ►

STERLING example of the current widescreen production values — but I wouldn't say it was an album of any lasting worth. Maybe I'm just old-fashioned — I *would* rather have had Bunny Wailer... There seems to be a language barrier at work here.

WHY IS it called *Language Barrier*?
Sly: "Cos of the song on the album... you know, you might go and play in Germany, or Japan, and they may not understand the words but they're still dancing... anyway, we thought it'd be a good name."

There isn't much reggae rhythm left here, is there?

S: "This isn't a reggae album though! What we're trying to do is get played on American radio constantly, not just now and again. In America, reggae doesn't get played on the radio as often as American music or English rock, so we're trying to achieve that. Also we think the time is right to start. We're playin' on the new Bob Dylan album, an' the Mick Jagger album also, and the new Yoko album. We think that in two or three years' time American radio will be playin' reggae, and this is a good time to start putting down some tracks."

"There's people there wanting to hear what we do, they say, 'play us some Sly an' Robbie', so we play them something they can market... an' that's why we doing this album, y'know? It's something that they can market. We think it's a good way so we get people so they're hearin' something like reggae every day on the radio. If American DJ start playin' this album right, and people get to know about Sly an' Robbie thing you never heard before... then maybe people start hearing reggae on American radio."

Ineffable logic, to be sure. Ineffable, and somewhat speculative. Will they make it big on American radio? Will they make it big as Reggae Supremos Sly and Robbie? Or reggae supremos in disguise? Or just as Sly and Robbie, as a couple of guys with gold chains around their necks, a natty line in expensive shirts and no history that the average American radio listener will get to hear about anyway? The logic is ineffable, and very, very iffy...

Good Jamaican reggae is getting very scarce over here, in any case. Most people are fastening their favour to the new generation of British MC's, like Papa Levi, Asher Senator and Smiley Culture, and the lovers singers, the foremost of whom is undoubtedly Maxi Priest. What does Sly Dunbar make of Maxi?

S: "I heard a lot about him, but I haven't heard the record yet. I think he's great..."

R (without looking up from the music paper which he is adorning with hieroglyphics): "Yeah, we ain't heard the record, but we think he's great..."

Grrrrr...

So are there any decent new Jamaican talents that we're missing out on here?

S: "There's a bad thing going around in Jamaica right now where a singer, if he's a bit successful, will

do the same tune over an' over with different producers. If they stuck with one producer for all that time maybe they'd come up with something, and the production would get better instead of getting worse... and the producers in the studios are now just putting new vocal an' melody over rhythm track over and over again — it's not creating something new, it's jus' copying something that Robbie an' meself have done, or Coxson, or Studio One or Treasure Island — I don't think there's any new producers like them coming up now.

"Look at all the *Sleng Teng* versions, ten or more of them. I don't see the need for all them versions of *Sleng Teng*. They could have come up with a different rhythm each time an' then we'd have eight or nine new rhythms — they're all just cashing in on the money and it's bad for all the artists... an' anybody could play *Sleng Teng*. The bass was played just on a Casio machine, and the rhythm, all they do is press a button! The rhythm's already there on the machine, one of those, what they called? Pre-programmed into the machine by the manufacturers..."

That's not a language barrier. That's just dumb...

So, chaps, you've been looking further afield for excitement? (Sly is looking at Robbie, who is still reading the paper...)

S: "Yeah... yeah..."

I'm rather puzzled why you would want to play on a Bob Dylan album, for example, or a Yoko Ono album...

S (Long-ish pause): "You say an answer, Robbie!"

R: "Whassat? Eh?"

I said, why on earth would you want to play on a Bob Dylan album. He isn't exactly top-grade dance material...

R: "But what is Bob Dylan renown' for?"

Words, a few melodies he wrote the best of nearly twenty years ago...

R: "And Sly and Robbie are renown' for the music an' rhythm, so — you put them together..."

Robbie interweaves his fingers, and grins at me. I get the impression he came up with this answer to this particular question a couple of days ago and had wheeled it out to every hack who asked it ever since. Robbie goes back to his paper.

S: "To tell you the truth, we enjoy playing with Bob Dylan very much..."

I think he's winding me up. It's to do with the way he says, "To tell you the truth..." I don't think I can have looked very convinced.

S: "...in fact, if he were to ask us right now to come an' be in his band an' play permanently with him, we'd do it..."

Oh yes really...? (Now I'm sure he's winding me up...) What about Yoko Ono? What was it like working with Yoko Ono?

S: "Yes, again, it was good. Every project we work on we try an' make it special. We don't try an' compare them, we treat 'em all as something special, so that's why each one will probably sound fresh..."

R (without looking up from his paper): "Mmmm..."

we like Yoko Ono's stuff... a lot..."

S: "Well, we didn't actually hear the finished stuff, just the voice from the rough track we were using at the time... but we do know the rhythm tracks are very powerful..."

CAN WE take time out? This is bizarre. What started out as a medium sensible interview degenerated rapidly into a Weird Situation. Mister Dunbar fields the questions, deigning to reply to them only so far as to deaden the momentum of the conversation, while Mister Shakespeare sits reading the music press... there's probably a joke there somewhere, but I suspect it isn't worth rooting out... I sipped my orange juice and ventured further...

How long did you spend on the Yoko Ono album?

R: "A couple of days... about five days, that's all. Five days, an' we layin' down nine tracks — no, ten tracks..."

That's going at it at rather a fair pace, innit?

S: "Heh, heh... yeah..."

What state was the material when you came in? Were there songs already there, or were you starting from scratch?

S: "A lot from scratch. She have already, I think, three songs all written, then for the others she played other tunes to us, an' say she want a rhythm along something like this — like one, she want a rhythm something like Police And Thieves — not exactly the same, with identical bassline an' all, but the same kind of feel, you know? The whole mood of the song..."

What's the best question you've been asked today?

S: "Some fella asked if we're millionaires yet. Heh, heh..."

And what did you tell him?

R: "We're not millionaires..."

Are you likely ever to be millionaires?

R: "If God wills that we're millionaires, then we'll be millionaires..."

One piece of tantalising news that did emerge from the conversation: they are 'considering' bringing a package of Taxi label stars over for a big five-hour concert sometime, probably next year, and the line-up will be somewhat similar to the anniversary concert they threw in Kingston last year to celebrate ten years of the label's existence. Presumably this would include the new Black Uhuru, Mighty Diamonds, Wailing Souls, Gregory Isaacs, Dennis Brown... the mouth waters. This is what they want, I can't help but feel. Never mind American radio! I beg to differ with their iffy missionary position, because I do not want to lose Sly and Robbie to an audience that will ply our heroes with riches as long as they are indistinguishable from the rest of American radio fodder. But *que sera sera*. Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare should do what they feel, and someone else will come along and take over where they left off.

No, really... it's fine. Now if you'll excuse me, I have some old Bunny Wailer records to attend to. ●

I CAN GET AWAY WITH BLUE MURDER!



LORNA WRIGHT

T H E 80 S

● *Halfway already! A lot has happened in the five years since the first issue of BLITZ in the autumn of 1980. We summed up 1985 so far in the last issue. Over the next nine pages we look at just a few of the people, events and obsessions that shaped the half-decade.*



Star Wars

● A Russian missile is destroyed by an American laser beam high above the earth . . . When, in 1983, Ronald Reagan proposed an anti-missile defence system which would 'render nuclear weapons obsolete', the idea was in general swiftly dismissed. The concept of satellites focusing and aiming earth-based high energy laser beams at incoming missiles sounded just too far-fetched to be believable. Times have changed, however. The highly advanced technology required to make 'Star Wars' feasible now appears to be within the realms of possibility, and the Russians, too, have initiated a similar research programme. Should the scheme ever come to fruition (and we're probably talking the twenty-first century here), the possibilities remain alarming. What does one side do if it realises the other is on the verge of rendering its whole nuclear arsenal obsolete? It has been suggested that the system, once completed, should be handed over to a neutral agency such as the United Nations. Should such a thing ever come to pass (admittedly highly unlikely), then President Ronald Reagan may one day go down in history, supreme irony notwithstanding, as a visionary peacemaker.

Computer Graphics

● The photograph on these pages is just one still from a striking, two-minute computer-generated sequence showing the Star Wars system in action. Designed and produced by the new British production company of English Markell Pockett, it was used in an ABC TV (New York) documentary entitled *The Fire Unleashed*, which examined the capabilities of nuclear power. Over the last five years computer graphics have come of age and are now regularly used in TV title sequences, in music promos and increasingly in commercials. The birth of channel 4 was a landmark – the new '4' logo and the way it was animated have since been recognised as a classic innovation. At the time the technology required was only to be found in America, where computer graphics were considerably advanced due mainly to spin-offs from the NASA space research programme. These days, however, much of the most advanced software is being written in Europe. Richard Markell of EMP believes that even more remarkable advances are not far away: "Computer graphics are fast heading towards ultra realism, where total reproduction of a person walking down the street will be possible. The sort of technological advances needed to make this possible will be increased dramatically when today's school children, who are now writing their own graphics software programmes on basic computers like the BBC Micro, contribute their skills to a fast-expanding industry." As he says himself, this could bring a whole new meaning to the words 'Computer Generation'.

1980

January

- As a result of inflation, the price of US gold almost doubles, on one day reaching the price of \$1000 per ounce.
- The Stranglers' Hugh Cornwell is imprisoned for two months for possession of heroin. During his incarceration he writes a book about his experiences.

February

- Santa Fe's New Mexico State Prison is the location for ferocious rioting in which more than 30 inmates die in a series of convict reprisals.

March

- Robert Mugabe is elected leader of Rhodesia, granted its independence two months later and renamed Zimbabwe.
- Radio Caroline closes as a result of severe North Sea storm damage.

April

- Police arrest black youths in Bristol's St. Paul's district, sparking off a vicious race riot.
- Terrorists seize the Iranian embassy in London, taking several hostages.
- As a result of a strike over pay, the staff of NME and Melody Maker are suspended by the publishers, IPC.
- The US seriously bungles an attempt to free the 52 American hostages held in Iran since November 1979.

May

- After a week-long siege by police, SAS soldiers storm the Iranian embassy killing four terrorists and freeing all hostages.
- A Florida jury acquits four white policemen charged with beating to death a black prisoner. Race riots break out in Miami in protest.

June

- 10,000 gallons of radioactive water are accidentally released from the US nuclear power station on Three Mile Island, only a few months after a serious radiation leak.
- US military forces are taken to nuclear alert twice in one week as a result of computer malfunction. In the second incident, computers mistakenly reported the launch of three Soviet nuclear missiles. Meanwhile, Americans are advised to register for military conscription in preparation for escalating US-Soviet deadlock over the war in Afghanistan.

July

- President Carter's re-election chances are hampered by allegations that his brother had received payment of \$220 thousand from the Libyan government.

August

- Italian right-wing terrorists explode a bomb in Bologna railway station killing 87 people.

September

- Iran and Iraq go to war after an escalation of their border conflict.
- Polish workers win the right to strike.
- Welsh bantamweight Johnny Owen, fighting for the world title, is knocked out, goes into coma, and dies six weeks later.

October

- CND, dormant since the sixties, makes a triumphant comeback with a huge march and rally in Trafalgar Square.

November

- Ronald Reagan wins a landslide victory in the US Presidential elections.
- Michael Foot is elected leader of the Labour Party.

December

- John Lennon is murdered in New York by Mark Chapman, whose motive, he claims, is that "I understood his words, but not his meaning."

1981

January

- Peter Sutcliffe is arrested and charged with the 13 Yorkshire Ripper murders.
- A fire kills 13 black youths after an all-night party in Deptford, South London.

- Ronald Reagan is inaugurated as President of the United States on the same day that the US hostages in Iran are released, after 444 days imprisonment.

February

- In an attempted coup d'etat, 200 civil guards invade the Spanish parliament in Madrid but fail to win the support of the people.
- Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer announce their engagement.

March

- Great Train Robber Ronald Biggs is kidnapped in Brazil by a team of British 'adventurers' and smuggled to Barbados. Attempts to extradite him to the UK fail and he returns to Brazil several days later.
- Labour MP Dr David Owen announces the formation of the Social Democratic Party.
- 400 republican prisoners at Belfast's Maze prison call off their 'dirty protest' as another prisoner, Bobby Sands, serving a 14 year sentence for terrorism, begins a hunger strike. Other prisoners follow suit.
- John Hinckley Jr. wounds President Reagan in an attempted assassination in Washington.

April

- The Space Shuttle Columbia takes off for the first time and returns successfully two days later.

Dollar Exchange Rate

Summer 1980:

£1.00=\$2.40

Summer 1985:

£1.00=\$1.37

Obsessions

Aerobics
Alternative Comedy



Boy George & Marilyn
Boxer Shorts
Brideshead Revisited
Britfunk
Car Clamps
Channel Four
Chart Hyping
Cocktails
Cruise Missiles
Designer Sportswear
The Dollar Exchange rate



Dreadlocks
Dynasty
Electrodisco
Exocet
Filofax
Fleet Street Bingo
Fly-on-the-wall documentary
George Orwell
The GLC
Harrison Ford
The Hitler Diaries
India
Jazz
Kipper Ties
Laser 558
London Listings magazines
Malcolm McLaren
Mel Gibson
Meryl Streep



Minder
Ministry of Defence spokesman Ian McDonald



Nastassja Kinski
New York Street Culture

New Psychodelia
Oscars for British films
Painted shirts
Paisley
Peter Powell & Janice Long
The Popemobile
Pound Coins
Prince
Randy Andy
Ray-Bans
Ripped Jeans
Royal Babies
Rubik's Cube
Sefton the wonder horse
Sexually transmitted diseases
Shares in British Telecom
Sloane Rangers
Soap Opera
Sony Walkmans
The Space Shuttle
Spies



Spitting Image
Sun tans
Torvill & Dean
Trivial Pursuit
Video
War
The Work Ethic
Ze
ZTT

Price of the NME

April 1980: 25p
August 1985: 45p

1980

Music

Ashes to Ashes — David Bowie
Oops Upside Your Head — Gap Band
There There My Dear — Dexy's Midnight Runners
Start — The Jam
One Day I'll Fly Away — Randy Crawford
Master Blaster — Stevie Wonder
Enola Gay — OMD
To Cut A Long Story Short — Spandau Ballet
Antmusic — Adam & The Ants
Runaway Boys — Stray Cats
In The Air Tonight — Phil Collins
Turning Japanese — The Vapors
Going Underground — The Jam
King/Food For Thought — UB40
Talk of the Town — The Pretenders
Happy House — Siouxsie & The Banshees
Geno — Dexy's Midnight Runners
Let's Get Serious — Jermaine Jackson
Funky Town — Lipps Inc.
Call Me — Blondie

Films

Airplane
Long Good Friday
Kramer vs. Kramer
The Empire Strikes Back
The Elephant Man
The Shining
Fame
Altered States
Tess
Gregory's Girl

Television

● In the world of television, the half-decade's most important development was unquestionably the launch of Channel Four in November 1982, the first new national television station since BBC-2. Not too surprisingly it got off to a shaky start, not only as a result of a dispute with Equity over limited royalties for actors appearing in commercials, leading to a near-blackout of advertising, but also from 'moral majority' outrage over the Channel's programme content. 'Channel Swore - Dirty Word Torrent From New TV Station' shouted the Sun, encouraging its readers to start a 'day by day filth count' of the number of swearwords broadcast. One MP was even moved to call for the station to be banned as a result of its New Year's Eve 'all-gay entertainment'. Many - but by no means all - of these complaints were provoked by the Channel's broad-minded attitude to television drama, represented at its best in Brookside and the series of Films on Four, which sparked off a minor renaissance in British filmmaking. The period's other major televisual innovation, TV-am, fared somewhat worse, looking at one stage as if it might not even survive to its first anniversary. Launched in January 1983, but preceded by the BBC's Breakfast Time, TV-am was quickly forced to exchange its starry and sophisticated ideals for something altogether more homely. Two companies who didn't last the course were Southern TV, and ATV, the ITV regional stations whose franchises were not renewed in January 1982, to be replaced by Central and TVS. More longterm developments were in cable TV and satellite broadcasting. As a result of the findings of the Hunt Committee in October 1982, the government opened up the market for independent cable TV stations. Meanwhile, the DBS (Direct Broadcast by Satellite) project hit a series of snags: France, Germany and Luxemburg have their own government-sponsored systems by which programmes can be beamed to homes by high-powered satellite, via a receiving dish. The British government, however, declined sponsorship, leading to the establishment of a consortium of the interested companies, among them ITV, BBC, and Virgin. Costs are high though, and a system of commercial broadcasting by low-powered, more localised satellites, known as SMATV, has developed quickly in the meantime. As in the case of Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV channel in the UK, programmes are beamed to a cable operator, who relays transmission to his community by cable. A questionmark hangs over DBS, so SMATV looks now to be the major site of development for the rest of the decade.

Marc Issue, journalist

Best Thing about the last five years? "The realisation that the worst thing to have happened to me in the last five years has already happened."
Worst Thing? "The realisation that the same thing applies to the best thing that happened."
What were you doing this time five years ago? "Masquerading as an art student in Coventry."



Paul Weller

The Best Thing about the last five years? "Forming the Style Council."
The Worst Thing? "Breaking my arm on tour in Germany last November."
What were you doing this time five years ago? "I was on holiday in Clacton..."

1981

Music

Chant No. 1 - Spandau Ballet
Tears Are Not Enough - ABC
Intuition - Linx
Ghost Town - Specials
Tainted Love - Soft Cell
Vienna - Ultravox
Wordy Rappinghood - Tom Tom Club
Me No Pop I - Coati Mundi
Reward - Teardrop Explodes
Once in a Lifetime - Talking Heads
Wheel Me Out - Was (Not Was)
B-Movie - Gil Scott-Heron
Don't You Want Me? - Human League
O Superman - Laurie Anderson
Bustin' Out - Material
C30 C60 C90 Go! - Bow Wow Wow
Somebody Help Me Out - Beggar & Co.
Kids in America - Kim Wilde
Happy Birthday - Altered Images
Slow Hand - Pointer Sisters

Films

Body Heat
Mephisto
Montenegro
An American Werewolf in London
Prince of the City
Raging Bull
Gallipoli
Raiders of the Lost Ark
Blow Out
Chariots of Fire



Stephen TinTin Duffy

"Five years ago I sang in a group called Obviously Five Believers. In search of suede Chelsea boots. And ecstasy. Bastard sons of Brian Jones, we were Birmingham's least favourite group. In fact only Greg and the Nervous Kind liked us. Sold out and made an electro record, downhill all the way, luckily. The worst thing about the last five years has obviously been five years of Tory misrule. The best and worst things are quite often inseparable, growing up for instance. The best thing, selfishly, was all the hedonism we indulged in, in spite of it all."



Lowpoint: Election night '83.



Lowpoint: Neil Kinnock appears in a Tracey Ullman video.



Greenham Common.



Riots in the summer of '81; widening the black/white divide.

● Riots erupt in Brixton after a skirmish between black youths and police. 40 days after beginning his hunger strike, IRA prisoner Bobby Sands becomes an MP in absentia after winning the Fermanagh bye-election.

May

● 66 days after beginning his hunger strike, Bobby Sands dies. 3 more hunger strikers die in the course of the month.
● The Pope is shot and wounded in St. Peter's Square by Turkish assassin Mehmet Ali Agca.
● Francois Mitterand succeeds Giscard d'Estaing as France's first socialist President.

June

● A 17 year-old is arrested after firing six blank shots at the Queen during the Trooping of the Colour in the Mall.
● After serious crowd disturbances at an England v. Switzerland match, the British Football Association state that they would support a complete ban on English supporters in Europe if necessary.
● Michael Bogdanov, director of the National Theatre's production of The Romans in Britain, is taken to court by Mary Whitehouse for allowing the simulation of sodomy on stage.

July

● Riots erupt in Southall after clashes between skinheads and West Indian and Asian youths. Similar scenes follow a day later in the Toxteth area of Liverpool. Police use CS Gas to control fighting and looting.
● John McEnroe ends Bjorn Borg's five year domination of Wimbledon, despite fines of £7500 for 'unsportsmanlike behaviour'.
● Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer are married.

August

● The price of bread trebles in Poland, and civil unrest grows.
● In a series of races, Sebastian Coe and Steve Ovett hand the World Mile Record back and forth three times in 9 days with Coe the final victor.
● Reagan announces that the US will proceed with the manufacture of the Neutron bomb.

September

● Dennis Healey retains the deputy leadership of the Labour Party against Tony Benn.
● Solidarity holds its first national congress.
● Trevor Francis becomes Britain's most expensive footballer, bought by Manchester City from Nottingham Forest for £1 million.

October

● After a crackdown on Egyptian dissidents during September, and the arrest of 1,500 'agitators', President Anwar Sadat of Egypt is assassinated in Cairo.
● An IRA nailbomb explodes outside Chelsea Barracks next to a coach carrying Irish Guardsmen. Two are killed, 40 injured.
● A Soviet submarine runs aground near a Swedish naval base.
● In Spain, contaminated cooking oil kills at least 175 people and hospitalises more than 16,000.

November

● Tony Benn is voted out of the Shadow Cabinet after refusing to conform to collective Cabinet responsibility.

December

● Martial Law is imposed in Poland after a series of demonstrations and strikes. Solidarity leader Lech Walesa is imprisoned.
● Sr. Javier Perez de Cuellar becomes secretary-general of the United Nations, on the same day that General Leopoldo Galtieri becomes President of Argentina.

1982

January

● British unemployment breaks the 3 million barrier for the first time.
● In Washington, a Boeing 737 crashes into a bridge over the Potomac river during a blizzard killing 81 people.

February

● Laker Airways collapse with debts of £210 million.
● De Lorean Cars collapses.
● St. Saviour's primary school, Toxteth, closes after staff are attacked and property is damaged by a rampaging mob of nine-year-old pupils.

March

● Argentinian scrap metal merchants raise their flag on the South Atlantic island of South Georgia.
● The government announces plans to replace the Polaris missile with the US Trident 2 strategic weapon system.
● Chariots of Fire wins four Oscars.

April

● Argentina invade and capture the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington is replaced by Francis Pym. The EEC bans all trade with Argentina. The Taskforce sets sail, and by the end of the month South Georgia is recaptured.
● After much diplomatic negotiation, Israel postpones an attack on guerilla installations in the Lebanon. Later in the month, Israel returns Sinai to Egypt.

May

● The sinking of the General Belgrano by submarine. Argentina retaliates by sinking the HMS Sheffield with an Exocet missile. British troops land on the Falklands and recapture Port Darwin and Goose Green.
● The Pope narrowly avoids a knife attack by an hysterical priest while visiting Portugal.

Retired Wounded

Michael Foot resigned as leader of the Labour Party after electoral defeat capped a series of bitter taunts from Fleet Street and from some elements within the Party.

Miss Germany elected Miss World 1980, only to abdicate her title mysteriously the following day.

Commander Michael Trestrail the Queen's personal detective resigned after press disclosure of a homosexual relationship.

General Alexander Haig stands down as American Foreign Secretary after the end of the Falklands War, replaced by George Schultz.

If it ain't
STIFF
it ain't worth
a fuck

The 'If It Ain't Stiff, It Ain't Worth A Fuck' T-shirt victim of a suit for indecency in 1980 and subsequently withdrawn.

John Fruin the managing director of WEA Records who resigned after a World in Action documentary implicated WEA as well as other record companies in 'chart hyping'.

Peter Adamson Coronation Street's Len Fairclough acquitted of charges of interfering with a young girl in a local swimming bath, but asked to leave the Street as a result of the ensuing publicity.

Geraldine Ferraro Walter Mondale's vice-presidential candidate, who withdrew from politics when the US media's mud-slinging campaign uncovered some embarrassing skeletons in her closet.

Bjorn Borg the five-time Wimbledon men's champion lost to John McEnroe, and retired two years later when the Wimbledon selection committee asked him to play in the qualifying rounds.

Muhammed Ali defeated by Larry Holmes after a vain attempt to regain the world heavyweight title in 1980 and subsequently advised by doctors to give up boxing for the sake of his health.

Casualties

Joy Adamson
Yuri Andropov
Arthur Askey
Douglas Bader
Lester Bangs
Count Basie
John Belushi
Ingrid Bergman
John Bonham
Reggie Bosoanquet
Leonid Brezhnev
Wilfred Bramble
Barney Bubbles
Luis Bunuel
Richard Burton
Truman Capote
Hoagy Carmichael
Karen Carpenter
Violet Carson

Tommy Cooper
Harry H Corbett
Ian Curtis
Gala Dali
Moshe Dayan
Jack Dempsey
Philip K. Dick
Diana Dors
Sean Downes
Dick Emery
Prince Far I
Pete Farndon
Rainer Werner Fassbinder
Marty Feldman
WPC Yvonne Fletcher
Henry Fonda
Billy Fury
Indira Gandhi
Marvin Gaye
Ira Gershwin
Bill Haley
Alex Harvey
Herge
Earl 'Fatha' Hines

1982

Music

Shipbuilding - Robert Wyatt
Sexual Healing - Marvin Gaye
Love is Just the Gret Pretender - Animal
Nightlife
Young Guns - Wham!
Just an Illusion - Imagination
Promised You a Miracle - Simple Minds
Get Down on it - Kool & The Gang
The Sweetest Girl - Scritti Politti
Mama Used to Say - Junior Giscombe
Love Plus One - Haircut 100
Poison Arrow - ABC
Ghosts - Japan
My Camera Never Lies - Bucks Fizz
Do I Do - Steve Wonder
I'm a Wonderful Thing - Kid Creole
Come on Eileen - Dexy's
Videothèque - Dollar
Save a Prayer - Duran Duran
Do You Really Want to Hurt Me? - Culture Club
The Message - Grandmaster Flash

Films

Blade Runner
Poltergeist
E.T.
The Thing
Mad Max II
Diva
Angel
48 Hours
Gandhi
Missing

Near Misses

The Pope shot and seriously wounded in St. Peter's Square by Turkish assassin Mehmet Ali Agca, then attacked several months later in Portugal by a mad, knife-wielding priest.



Lynval Golding the Fun Boy Three member savagely knifed in a Coventry disco after a minor argument.

Gary Numan obliged to make a forced landing in his Cessna light aircraft in the middle of a motorway after running out of petrol.

Bristol City F.C. saved at the eleventh hour from bankruptcy when sacked

Alfred Hitchcock
William Holden
Stanley Holloway
David Janssen
Yootha Joyce
Grace Kelly
Arthur Koestler
Alexis Korner
Kit Lambert
John Lennon
Lotte Lenya
Professor Longhair
Joe Louis
Arthur Lowe
Mantovani
Bob Marley
David Martin
Steve McQueen
Ethel Merman
John Le Mesurier
Henry Miller
Jacob Miller
Thelonious Monk
Kenneth More

Unemployment (Official Figures)

July 1985: 3,235,000 April 1980: 1,522,000

players agreed to waive large parts of their redundancy pay.

Solidarity along with figurehead Lech Walesa the obvious target of persecution by the Polish military after the imposition of martial law. Imprisoned, Walesa was otherwise unharmed.



Neil Tennant, The Pet Shop Boys
Best Thing about the last five years?
"Giving up working."
Worst Thing?
"The Falklands War; the rise of Robert Maxwell; AIDS."
What were you doing this time five years ago?
"Getting involved in an industrial dispute as union father of the chapel at a publishing house. I was sacked in October."

TV-AM struggled bravely through a series of financial crises, and brought no glory to its much trumpeted team of celebrity presenters, few of whom lasted more than a few months.

Private Eye at the receiving end of two major libel cases, one brought by Sir James Goldsmith, costing them £85,000 in damages, and one by Cecil Parkinson, which led to temporary suspension.



Richard Pryor narrowly avoided self-immolation while trying to smoke 'freebase' cocaine in 1980.

Stephen Waldorf a television sound engineer shot several times by police marksmen when mistaken for escaped gunman David Martin.

Johnny Ramone the Ramones guitarist severely beaten up and hospitalised in New York as a result of an argument over a girl.

Alhaji Dikko former Nigerian Minister of Transport rescued from a crate at Stansted airport after an attempt to kidnap and return him to Nigeria for trial.

Norman Tebbit rescued by firemen from the rubble of the Conservative Party hotel wrecked by an IRA bomb.

1983

Music

Love Wars - Womack & Womack
Blue Monday - New Order
Confusion - New Order
Rockit - Herbie Hancock
Buffalo Gals - Malcolm McLaren
Wherever I Lay My Hat - Paul Young
Billie Jean - Michael Jackson
Let's Dance - David Bowie
Bad Day - Carmel
Relax - Frankie Goes to Hollywood
Lucky Star - Madonna
Red Red Wine - UB40
Ain't Nobody - Chaka Khan & Rufus
Coups - 23 Skidoo
White Lines - Grandmaster Melle Mel
Sweet Dreams - Eurythmics
Rip it Up - Orange Juice
Temptation - Heaven 17
Money-Go-Round - Style Council
Every Breath You Take - The Police
War Baby - Tom Robinson

Films

The Verdict
First Blood
Wargames
Eureka
Educating Rita
Flashdance
Frances
Diner
Blue Thunder
Return of the Jedi

Eric Morecambe
Oswald Mosley
David Niven
Klaus Nomi
Pascale Ogier
Johnny Owen
Malcolm Owen
Jesse Owens
Barry Prudom
George Raft
Marie Rambert
Ralph Richardson
Marty Robbins
Leonard Rossiter
Jean Paul Sartre
Bon Scott
James Honeyman Scott
Peter Sellers
The Shah of Iran
Bill Shankly
Michael Smith
Gloria Swanson
Jacques Tati
Joe Tex

President Tito of Yugoslavia
Francois Truffaut
Kenneth Tynan
Gilles Villeneuve
Jack Warner
Muddy Waters
Mae West
Tennessee Williams
Dennis Wilson
Jackie Wilson
Natalie Wood
Bernard Youens

Altered Images
Bad Company
Bauhaus
The Beat
Blondie
The Bodysnatchers
Buzzcocks
The Chords
The Eagles

Fun Boy Three
Generation X
Haysi Fantaysee
Japan
The Jam
Led Zeppelin
Linx
Magazine
The Mo-dettes
The Only Ones
Pigbag
Sector 27
The Skids
The Slits
The Specials
Stiff Little Fingers
The Teardrop Explodes
Theatre of Hate
Thin Lizzy
The Tourists
The Undertones
The Who
Wings
Yazoo

June

● Argentinian aircraft bomb the HMS Plymouth and the landing ships Sir Galahad and Sir Tristram during a landing at Bluff Cove. 7 days later, Argentine forces in Port Stanley surrender. General Galtieri is deposed.
● Israel's ambassador to Britain, Shlomo Argov, is shot and seriously wounded in London. Israel begins the bombing of areas around Beirut in retaliation, and invades Southern Lebanon 3 days later. The PLO agree to evacuate.
● The Princess of Wales gives birth to a son.

July

● 2 IRA bombs explode in Hyde Park killing ten people and several horses.
● Michael Fagan invades the Queen's bedroom.
● Geoffrey Prime appears in court for the first time on an Official Secrets charge, and several months later, admits spying for the Soviet Union.

August

● The Israelis seize Beirut airport. The PLO leave Beirut.

September

● Hundreds die in massacres at Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut, allegedly at the hands of Lebanese Christian Phalangists.
● Michael Foot wins support from the Labour Party over the expulsion of members of Militant Tendency.

October

● Sinn Fein win five seats at the Northern Ireland Assembly.
● John de Lorean is arrested in Los Angeles on drugs charges.
● The Mary Rose is raised in Plymouth harbour.

November

● Leonid Brezhnev dies of a heart attack and is replaced by former KGB chief Yuri Andropov.
● Channel Four goes on the air.
● The Animal Rights Militia send a series of incendiary devices to politicians, including the Prime Minister.

December

● The Greenham Common women set up home around the Berkshire airbase where the first US Cruise missiles are to be sited.
● Martial Law in Poland is suspended.

1983

January

● Stephen Waldorf is mistaken for escaped criminal David Martin and is shot and seriously wounded by police. Two weeks later, David Martin is arrested in a London Underground station.
● The wearing of seat-belts becomes compulsory.
● Two women die during crowd disturbances at New Year celebrations in London's Trafalgar Square.
● Bjorn Borg announces his official retirement from world tennis.
● TV-am begins broadcasts, and soon finds itself in serious financial trouble.

February

● Human flesh is discovered in the drains of a house in the North London suburb of Muswell Hill. Dennis Nilsen is arrested and charged with multiple murder.

March

● President Reagan launches open discussion of the US 'Star Wars' programme.
● The Compact Disc is launched.

April

● Germany's Stern magazine pay £2.3 million for the right to publish extracts from what are alleged to be 60 volumes of Adolf Hitler's personal diaries. The Sunday Times buy British serial rights. Both are seriously embarrassed when the diaries are discovered to be complete forgeries.
● Gandhi wins 8 Oscars.

May

● 750 demonstrators are arrested at a sit-down at the Upper Hayford US air base in Oxfordshire.

June

● Election time: The Conservatives win a landslide victory. Michael Foot stands down as Party leader after bitter recriminations. Shirley Williams loses her parliamentary seat.
● America sends its first woman into space, Sally Ride.

July

● Britain experiences the Long Hot Summer, with temperatures at their highest for 300 years.

August

● A South Korean Airlines flight is shot down by Soviet fighters after invading Russian airspace.
● The US reject a Russian offer to reduce the number of its nuclear missiles in exchange for cancellation of plans to deploy missiles in Europe.

September

● Reagan sends US forces into the Lebanon.
● 38 IRA prisoners escape from the Maze prison.

October

● Cecil Parkinson resigns after disclosure of his relationship with his secretary, Sarah Keays.
● Neil Kinnock becomes leader of the Labour Party.

Sony's latest idea: a little something to keep your tapes in.



Cassettes illustrated are not included.

There's no better place to test the high frequency output of a Sony HFS tape than roaring up the road in an open top, high performance car.

How fortunate then that when you buy a 3 pack of Sony HFS tapes you can enter a competition to win one. The Ford Escort 1600i Cabriolet.

On top of that, with every purchase of a special offer pack, you're guaranteed a quality cassette case. Free.

So either way you'll have somewhere to keep your cassettes.



**SONY
TAPE**

Price of 20 marlboro

March 1980:
R.R.P. 70p
August 1985:
R.R.P. £1.33

1984

Music

Two Tribes - Frankie Goes to Hollywood
The Reflex - Duran Duran
Wood Beez - Scritti Politti
Hyperactive - Thomas Dolby
Nelson Mandela - Specials
No Sellout - Malcolm X
I Feel For You - Chaka Khan
When Doves Cry - Prince
Venceremos - Working Week
Dr. Mabuse - Propaganda
Automatic - Pointer Sisters
I Wanna Be Loved - Elvis Costello
Cockney Translation - Smiley Culture
Girls Just Want to Have Fun - Cyndi Lauper
What Difference Does it Make? - The Smiths
Your Love is King - Sade
Perfect Skin - Lloyd Cole
Red Guitar - David Sylvian
High Energy - Evelyn Thomas
Why? - Bronski Beat
Keep on Keepin' On - The Redskins

Films

Trading Places
Another Country
Splash
Indiana Jones & The Temple of Doom
The Hit
Paris, Texas
Purple Rain
Rumble Fish
Streets of Fire
The Right Stuff



Jimmy Somerville

Best Thing about the last five years?
"Going from the dote to a life of comfort as a result of Bronski Beat."
Worst Thing?
"Everything that went with it, particularly becoming public property."
What were you doing this time five years ago?
"Spending my time as an apprentice baker and disco queen in Finsbury Park."

William Shaw, journalist

Best Thing about the last five years?
"Being referred to in Punch by the Right Honourable Roy Hattersley MP as the composer of an 'idolrous pen-portrait'."
Worst Thing?
"...has happened many times, and always at the barbers."
What were you doing this time five years ago?
"Happily pushing a lawnmower on behalf of Trofaen district council in Pontypool (labourer, unskilled. Parks Dept., works no. 517)."

Magazines

Magazines come, magazines go: the last five years have seen an almost unprecedented amount of activity among publishers, particularly in the highly influential music and youth culture market. The 1980 music press strike set the tone for the half decade: a wages dispute at magazine publishers IPC led to the suspension of both the NME and Melody Maker for several vital summer months. The gap was filled briefly by the worthy but short-lived New Music News, and the tabloids returned eventually, but their sales have maintained a steady decline ever since, losing hand over fist to glossy colour magazines offering superior visuals and no newsprint. Smash Hits made the half-million mark in sales and inspired, along the way, several imitators, among them No.1, launched in May 1983. Less successful were Flexipop (deceased 1983), and the Punk/Oi/Metal hybrid Noise! (deceased 1984). It was also a time for trying out new ideas: SFX, a magazine on cassette tape, arrived in 1982, but, hampered by restrictions on the amount of music it could play, called it a day in 1983. Debut, which combined a free album with a magazine, rose and fell in 1984. Trax, billed as 'London's Own Music Paper', came and went in the space of three months at the beginning of 1981, and Kicks, a worthy attempt at combining music and social comment for the under-twenties, arrived in November of the same year, but collapsed in 1982. 1981 also witnessed the battle for the London listings market. Time Out staff went on strike in May 1981 over management's attempt to do away with the magazine's equal-pay-for-all wages system. Meanwhile Richard Branson announced plans to enter the gap with a Virgin magazine, Event, and Time Out's striking journalists set up their own breakaway magazine, City

Country Music, Famous Film, Famous Music, Famous TV, Famous Sport...
London: February 18-24 50p.

Event



Limits. Event lasted only a year, but its two rivals appear still to flourish, despite the occasional hiccup. Amongst other new arrivals: Smash Hits' sister publication Just Seventeen, launched in October '83, and followed, a year-and-a-half later, by two imitators, Mizz and Etcetra; and The Beat, launched in September 1984, a music magazine distributed through the HMV chain of record shops. With another eight magazines at least announced for the end of this year or beginning of next, who knows what the next five years will bring...

● Lech Walesa wins the Nobel Peace Prize.

● The US invade Grenada.

● Premier Andropov threatens to break off peace talks if US missiles are sited in Europe.

November

● The first Cruise missiles arrive at Greenham Common.

● In South Africa, constitutional rights are extended to 'coloureds', but not to the state's enormous 'black' population.

● Pickets and police clash outside the factory of Eddie Shah's Messenger Newspaper group's printers.

● The Soviet Union break off peace talks in Geneva.

December

● IRA bombs explode at Harrods, at Woolwich Barracks, and in Kensington High Street and Oxford Street.

● The PLO leave Tripoli, their chief refuge after expulsion from Beirut.

1984

January

● The government oblige personnel at Cheltenham GCHQ to renounce trade union membership.

● Ronald Reagan announces his intention to run for another presidential term.

● BBC Radio bans Relax.

● Michael Jackson's hair catches fire during the making of a Pepsi-Cola TV commercial.

February

● Civil War breaks out in Beirut. US and British staff, civilians and military withdraw.

● Konstantin Chernenko replaces Yuri Andropov as Soviet premier.

● As a result of dispute with customs officials on the French-Italian border French lorry drivers blockade main roads across the Alps.

March

● Thousands of miners go on strike over the National Coal Boards plans to close uneconomic pits.

● Sarah Tisdall is imprisoned for six months for leaking defence documents to The Guardian.

● Zola Budd is granted a British passport in time for qualification in the Olympics.

● Tony Benn wins the Chesterfield bye-election, and returns to the House of Commons.

April

● The Siege of the Libyan embassy in London after shots fired from the window at anti-Gaddafi demonstrators kill a woman police constable.

● Michael Bettaney, an MI5 counter-espionage officer is imprisoned for leaking information to the Soviet Union.

May

● Marvin Gaye is shot dead in an argument with his father.

● The Soviet Union pull out of the Los Angeles Olympics after American 'anti-Soviet Hysteria', followed by other Communist Bloc countries.

June

● President Reagan visits Ireland and Britain.

● Virgin Atlantic makes its first flight.

● 1000 Sikhs are killed in disturbances at the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

July

● The former Nigerian minister of Transport, Alhaji Dikko is rescued by police from a crate at Stanstead airport, having been kidnapped outside his home in Bayswater.

● The Olympic games begin in Los Angeles.

● Robert Maxwell purchases the Daily Mirror.

August

● Sean Downes is killed by a plastic bullet during a political meeting in Belfast.

● Olympics: Steve Ovett collapses; Zola Budd and Mary Decker collide.

● Hollie Roffey, the first child by a surrogate mother, becomes the focus of a worldwide blaze of publicity.

September

● The Fleet Street Bingo War begins.

October

● The BBC broadcasts its second report from famine-torn Ethiopia. Sitting at home watching, Bob Geldof makes a momentous decision.

● The British and Chinese governments finally reach agreement on the future of Hong Kong.

November

● In a landslide victory, President Reagan is re-elected.

● A bomb explodes in the Conservative Party Conference hotel in Brighton killing several, and only narrowly missing The Prime Minister and Norman Tebbit.

● Indira Gandhi is assassinated by Sikh extremists.

● British Telecom launches its private shares.

December

● An accident at the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India causes poisonous gases to be emitted, killing many.

● On the same day that Neil Kinnock and Arthur Scargill appear together for the first time on a political platform, pickets accidentally kill a Welsh taxi driver on the picket line.

Photographs of SB by David LaChapelle. Make up by William Falkner of Pin-Up. Dress by Tatters. Pearls by Adrian Mann.

THE
80s



Heroin

● If you look down the list of 'casualties' printed earlier in this review of the eighties, you'll find only twelve people named who died aged 35 or under. What you might also notice is that five of those twelve – 40% – died from drug-related causes, and three – a quarter – died specifically as a result of heroin overdose. The massive upsurge in the number of heroin users over the last five years, one of the most disturbing 'trends' of the half-decade, is only partly reflected in those figures.

Much of this upsurge relates quite closely to the events of the period. During the late seventies, heroin suddenly became very much more readily available, at very low prices, imported originally from Iran by exiles fleeing the new Khomeini regime. Upheavals in Afghanistan a few years later opened up another source of supply from the Pakistan/Afghanistan border area. And more recently, perhaps because of the enormous amount of money to be made from heroin production, new supplies have become available from the Far East – Thailand, Burma and Laos.

As prices remain low, so availability increases, particularly around highly concentrated urban communities. It's probably easier now to get heroin than it ever has been before, and numbers have increased further as a result of a switch from injection to inhalation. It's a far less daunting prospect than injection for the potential user, even though it takes only a very little longer for physical dependence to set in, and, in the long term, the effect is the same.

Figures are notoriously unreliable – there is no accurate way of measuring the number of UK heroin addicts – but the figures that exist offer some vague barometer of increases in usage. The number of registered addicts, those notified to the Home Office by their doctors, has jumped rapidly from around 2,250 in 1980 to approximately 7,300 in 1984. The total number of addicts is very much larger, five or six times higher; between 35,000 and 42,000. The total number of heroin users, not just addicts but also those who try the drug from time to time but not often enough to become dependent, is far higher still.



George Clinton and Thomas Dolby

AND YOUR ASS WILL FOLLOW

GEORGE CLINTON

continuously a dominant influence on Black American music over the last twenty-five years, began his musical career with a mid-fifties vocal group, The Parliaments, formed while he was working as a hair straightener at a black hairdressers in New Jersey. In the sixties

he won himself a job as a staff writer at Motown, and, in 1967, secured a huge hit with the love song I Just Wanna Testify. A legal battle over The Parliaments' name in the same year led to the creation of a secondary project, Funkadelic, using many of the same musicians, but signed to a different label. After a victorious law suit, The Parliaments returned, but with their name shortened to parliament, and through the late sixties and seventies Clinton ran the two outfits side by side, with Parliament, in theory at least, the more commercial of the two, and Funkadelic the more experimental. As a result of a series of fabulously extravagant stage shows, the Parliament/Funkadelic collective, by the mid-seventies, rivalled Earth, Wind & Fire as America's top black act. Through the years, Clinton has been credited with, amongst other feats, the introduction in the late 60's of a kind of punk funk hybrid, partly influenced by Detroit bands such as the Stooges and MC5; with the invention of the so-called 'psychedelic funk' of the late 60's; with the introduction of pseudo-science fiction imagery into funk live shows, influencing soul acts from the Isley Brothers to Earth, Wind & Fire; and most recently with introducing in the late seventies synthesised bass lines, influencing just about everyone.

● Interview by Mark Cordery
● Photograph by Richard Croft

"SO WIDE you can't get around it. So low you can't get under it. So high you can't get over it... Feet don't fail me now!" Funkadelic's 1978 manifesto remains something of an ideal, not to mention a cliché, even today. A carnival sound; an expansive soundscape of colour and movement, its evident inclination towards anarchy checked only by the resilience of the funk at its core. A clash of atmospheres, heady and chaotic, in which odd details bubble to the surface, are picked out, before submerging again into the thronging, Clintonic generality. A party and no mistake! Present also, carnival's tang of danger, the threat of breakdown, voodoo; passions played upon, and on and on until who knows what the cumulative effect might be.

As long ago as the late 1960's, and throughout the 1970's, George Clinton's was the face behind the Force. Parliament's 1976 US R&B number one, *I Wanna Testify*, helped form the foundation of the P-Funk empire, spreading all over the place via Funkadelic, The Brides Of Funkenstein, Zapp, Parlet and Bootsy's Rubber Band. 'Rescuing dance music from the blahs', courtesy of George Clinton/Thang Inc., with a little help from a pick-up team of Clinton cohorts, headed by William 'Bootsy' Collins and an ever-rolling credit list of Uncle Jam's Drum & Wiggle Corps, Bass Anti-Flam Units, Banjo'd Muthapluckers and Vocal Assault & Funkatation Teams. Pedro Bell in the Department Of Artworks furthered the cause of Funkadelica, covering gatefold sleeves with dense, druggy cartoons and exclamations of funkation. And Clinton? Well, for instance, Clinton wore white furry shorts. Yeah. *White furry shorts*.

"Over the top? We were there."

In town this afternoon George Clinton still has the technicolour edge over everything on two legs, except for maybe a particularly flashy peacock. Looks well, though, and I don't know how old he is - 40? 50? - but I've seen a lot look worse at his age. His conversation is like his music, a groove. You

get caught up in it, but you can't be sure what's coming next. It's almost entirely free of received opinion (as I say, a peacock not a parrot). It makes its own sense.

Thomas Dolby's here too, with his cube. Dolby's Cube - *May The Cube Be With You* - featured Funkadelic's Curtis and Chambers, and vocalist Debra Barsha - "currently the topless pianist in the Broadway production of *Oh Calcutta!*" according to Dolby. "That's how she deals with stress." Clinton contributed 'Guest Vocals' and, I guess, inimitable studio ambience. "I try to be a creative nuisance" is how he puts it.

"WHICH ONE is George Clinton?" asks a voice somewhere in the mix of *Promentalshitbackwash-psychosisenemasquad (The DooDoo Chasers)*. The Producer, most of the time. One of the writers, usually. One of the singers. Crazy he may be - and I don't mean Radio One-golly-we're-all-so-mad-and-zany-here-gush-gosh. I mean touched with unique perspectives - but distant he ain't. Not for him the 'All Songs Written, Arranged, Played And Produced By The Lonely Genius' Prince-style operation. Delegation is the name of the game. Although the genesis of *Free Alterations*, a snappy, finger-clicking swing thing from *Computer Games*, sounds like an extreme example:

"When I first thought of that one, I told two of my sons, 'Y'all go ahead and work on that one'. I was wasted out of my mind, I couldn't write it down but I didn't want to forget it. They came back the next morning, said, 'We got the track but we don't know what you're talking about.' Well... the pressing need for the individual to measure up some protective clothing for a psyche under threat in a genetically engineered future, as it happens.

Thomas Dolby: "But what about cubes?"

George Clinton: "They're never late, they're never

early. They're never before the beat or after the beat. They're never even on the beat. They are the beat, y'know, when they're in town. Everything about them is beat."

This particular Dolby/Clinton beat is certainly a cracker, although, the *GooGooPlexus* b-side notwithstanding, P-Funk was never this clean and sensible. However, Clinton himself also has a new 45 out, the remarkable *Double Oh-Oh*, on which a snare drum of relentless brutality gives the on-beat a rare seeing-to. It's a bracing taste of the *Some Of My Best Jokes* LP which, whatever it will be, will not be dedicated to The Creator, as is the vogue with the majority of 'black' music these days; whether spiritually bankrupt or otherwise.

"First of all I don't think you have to dedicate it, He'd know where He's at, or It, or whatever *That* is. It's belittling to think that you can give something to *That*. I think that's a cheap shot. Anything we try to conceive about *That* isn't doing it — *It* — justice. I feel bad enough singing about *luurve* all the time; that's commercialising it. It's OK to say, like, 'Thanks for another day's funk'. That's cool. But Production credit? C'mon, let's be reasonable. Give Him His statement! Or give it to your favourite charity — then you'd see how many of those people mean it."

FUNK
"Wherever's needed it, it's usually thrived there. Any place that has something of a... ghetto — for want of a better word — where all people have is the ability to entertain themselves, to make themselves happy, they become funky, because funky is that last thing you reach for to keep yourself from going crazy. The funkiest place I've seen, just naturally, is Liverpool..."

If Prince is the character currently taking funk where no funk has gone before, and if Sly Stone and Jimi Hendrix ("He manipulated noise until you could feel it... sexually") were the most astral of Clinton's contemporaries, precedents for the voyages of the P-Funk Mothership can be traced back to the innovators who jumped and jived through the 40's and 50's fashioning a free-floating language with codes of its own and a wicked, sensual humour to match the smile on its many faces. Perhaps the spiritual Godfather to them all — all the way from Little Richard to Kid Creole — was the interpreter supreme of *You Run Your Mouth And I'll Run My Business*, *What's The Use Of Getting Sober*, *Reet, Petite & Gone*: Louis Jordan.

"I sampled his shit a lot," says Clinton, smiling with the memory. Of course, his place in this tradition of hip surreality would be seriously affected by the sense-altering chemicals that became very popular in the 1960's. (Clinton as Louis Jordan on acid?) "That music I learnt from my mother," he continues. "After leaving Motown I fell in love with singing in unison as opposed to harmony. Chants. James Brown... Phil Spector... gangs of voices, funky gospel music. Once I couldn't get through Motown 'cos of the slickness I thought, OK, it's time for *anti-slick*..."

Hang on a mo', George. *Motown*, you say?
"Yeah, we were signed for about three years. Never got a record out. They'd take our songs and

give them to somebody else — as they always did. But it was good education. If you really needed to learn to take a joke, Motown was the place to learn it. Undisputed Truth had a record out, sold a few copies of it and they pulled it back in and The Temptations did it. *Papa Was A Rollin' Stone*. But that was one thing about Motown; if the stars didn't have a hit record everyone else was in trouble 'till they got one."

Clinton says all this in a soft, sleepy-time-down-South accent, generously punctuated with chuckles for semi-colons and belly laughter for full-stops. Drawn-out vowels, of course, and the italicised words go up a pitch with a kind of aural raised eyebrow. The sound conveys a relaxed, amused equanimity.

If Motown was basic training for him, his troops were hardly battle-hardened vets either. Not in musical terms at any rate: "They was all 14, 15, 16, they were like our little brothers. They all came together from Plainfield, New Jersey. It wasn't like you could just fire 'em, and they was doing heavier drugs than I had ever *thought* of doing, at that time. They was fifteen years old and they was *all strung out*. And between them and my wife... well, I just had to be cool, I couldn't get *rid* of none of them. Because that was people you loved you had to stay there and stick in. But it made everything that much stronger... Motown was like the icing on the cake. Sly (Stone) said, 'Don't let the icing get in the way of your cake'."

Having learned a thing or two at The Sound Of Young America, future P-funk permutations were to be spread around a number of different companies. After the false start at Motown, Parliament and Funkadelic, by the mid-70's, were well-established million-sellers, and P-Funk proliferation was proving to be a great success all round. "Yeah. If The Brides get a hit on one label, then I'm a Bride. If Bootsy gets a hit on another label, then I'm Bootsy. When either one of us gets a hit, then the whole company is hired."

This diversification has obvious advantages: "The labels get competitive. Whereas one might say 'He's through' — and it's so easy for them to do that — 'Oh, he's burned out, he's a nut'. But the minute you get a hit on another label they feel like a idiot. I try to keep them all happy, I'm not partial..."

And quite a party it was, too. Especially on stage. "It's all about acting. It ain't about singing, it's about confidence and acting. Once you're confident and believe it, everybody can believe it." Which is rational up to a point, but only up to a point. "I used to play stuff just to see what I could get away with. I'd think, *shit*, this ain't s'posed to work. But once you get that groovy and that confident it comes from somewhere else. You ain't got nothing to do with it. Even when you try to mess up, once you're in the groove, you can't."

By this time Clinton was in a position to seal a multi-million-dollar deal with CBS to distribute his own label. It seemed there was no stopping him. Who would want to, indeed? No one I know, but stopped he was. Legal problems at Warner Brothers put out the light on Funkadelic and knocked on to the new deal at CBS. Casablanca, the site of

Parliament, was swallowed up by PolyGram, and that group seemed to go into permanent recess. Looks like the party's over...

Hey! Isn't that The Gap Band over there? Rick James! Good to see you...

"SPECIAL THANKS to George Clinton," it said on the back of the Xavier record that turned out to be one of the big club noises of '82, *Work That Sucker To Death*. "See, I can still cut a record," said George, "I'm not that drugged out". After a few years' absence Clinton was trying to negotiate a deal with Capitol, and the point had to be made.

"The guy from the record company was working with this group, and struggling with the record. This particular guy's decision as to whether I got signed or not was the last straw, so if I convinced him that I knew what I was doing, then I was in, I pulled all guns: I did that record, I did Atomic Dog..." Which hung around behind *Billie Jean* at number two in the US charts for four weeks, before finally seeing it off and becoming top dog. "Bow wow wow, yippee yo yippee yay."

"They was checkin' me out to see if I was really over the top, 'cos I hadn't done nuthin' for a couple a years. And when you don't do nuthin' for a couple of years you can do the same habits you was doin' when you was makin' a million dollars, and if you was doin' *drugs* an' makin' a million dollars: OK, you're hip. The minute you get *broke*, or *not* having a hit record and you're doing that, then you're a crazy fool who done spent all his money on drugs! So I didn't waste no time straightening up that part of the image. 'See, I can still do this record here...'"

Loopzilla followed, and was also massive in all senses of the word. Both tracks had been taken from the *Computer Games* LP, which had actually come out the autumn of the year before, to hardly any attention at all. Now it could be re-pressed with 'INCLUDES THE HITS' stickers all over it. Including *Get Dressed*, which might well refer to the full, stepping-out rehabilitation of the Prime Mover of the state of P-Funk.

Contemporary developments in the mechanical percussion department hadn't phased him (out) either. *Computer Games* was appositely titled, as in its way was 1983's LP, *You Shouldn't Nuf Bit, Fish*. Meaning? Something-like, don't take the bait, 'less you can carry the weight, perhaps. Oddly enough, Clinton has never been one to make extravagant claims on his own behalf — plenty of others around to do that! — yet he remains one of the most audacious highwaymen in modern music. If too much of a maverick to be commonly appreciated as such.

When he says, as he does to me, that "Our business is entertainment," he doesn't mean exactly what any essentially conservative showbiz pinhead would mean by that. *Some Of My Best Jokes Are Friends* is pretty much to the point. Funk often has a big grin on its face, but it isn't always funny. In Clinton's hands it becomes mischief of the highest (dis)order; political, even. Indeed, as avant-jazzers are prone to remark, this music is as serious as your life.

BLITZ BACK ISSUES



5. WINTER 81 Stephen Linard & Fiona Dealey; Marianne Faithfull; The Rock Press; Belle Stars; Patrick Caulfield.

6. SPRING 82 Hunter Thompson interview; The sartorial elegance of Nick Heyward, Mick Karn, Kim Wilde, Belle Stars & Ronny; Bill Forsyth; Ugly George.

10. APRIL 83 Paul Morley interview; French & Saunders; Everything But the Girl; Tim Page's Vietnam; Return of the Jedi; Alternative Interior design; Frank Zappa.

11. MAY 83 Julian Cope; What's wrong with British Advertising?; Dennis Hopper; Bowie - Hunger preview; Worst of Hollywood; Martin Sheen; Pete Shelley.

13. JULY/AUG 83 Record Sleeve Designers; Rick Baker special effects; Yello; Tony Wilson; Paul Haig; Jack Kerouac.

19. MARCH 84 Paul Weller; Keith Allen; Linton Kwesi Johnson; Feargal Sharkey; Robbie Coltrane; Life in Russia; Sam Fuller; Elliott Gould.

24. SEPT 84 Nick Rhodes; Gary Kemp; Best of BLITZ; Mel Smith; BLITZ/Olympus Photography competition; Company of Wolves; Tim Roth; Fela Kuti.

25. OCT 84 Boy George writes about the media; Neil Kinnock and the selling of the Labour Party; Aztec Camera; Miles Copeland; Nicholas Coleridge; History of the Showroom Dummy.

28. FEB 85 Anne Pigalle; Tom Bailey; BLITZ guide to New York; Jean Michel Jarre; Streetsounds; Pet Shop Boys; Paul Morley on Pop Stars and Music Journalism.

29. MARCH 85 Paul Young; Katharine Hammett interview; Steven Berkoff; Terry Gilliam; Dennis Skinner MP; Little Benny; Suzanna Hamilton.

30. APRIL 85 Julie Walters; Robert Palmer & The Power Station; The Advertising Industry examined; Yello; Guardian Angels; Tony Doyle; Bill Nelson; Chakk.

31. MAY 85 Morrissey interviews Pat Phoenix; Billy Connolly; George Cole; Billy Bragg; Swamplands label; The Untouchables; Los Lobos; Severed Heads; Jesus & Mary Chain.

32. JUNE 85 Scritti Politti; Pete Townshend; Nic Roeg & Insignificance; Fine Young Cannibals; Prefab Sprout; Allen Ginsberg; Alex Cox; Stephen Linard; The Woodentops.

33. JULY/AUG 85 Billy Idol in New York; Gil Scott-Heron; The selling of Bruce Springsteen; Nicolas Cage; Level 42; Jay McInerney; Shrickback; Maxi Priest.

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LONDON SKINS RULE OK?

"Skinheads could be identified as a separate group in 1968 because of their distinctive dress and appearance, the type of music they liked and the tough, aggressive behaviour which they displayed." SKINHEAD, Nick Knight.

SECOND SKIN! DIE NEUE LONDON SKINS. A strong accusation, but one which is nevertheless very much in vogue (or as near as it dares to get to that great cathedral in Hanover Square).

The blackest mood, that which begat **TERRORIST CHIC**, and a generation who blanked colour completely, seems to have blown up in the faces of its creators (timely justice?), and the hippest happiest hapless hipsters have now discovered **TERRACE CHIC**.

SKINHEAD RETURNS. Hair today, gone tomorrow.

As men and women alike shave off all those heavy locks which became the key to hip-py-dom, they are assuming in their place **HEAVY LOOKS** which they brandish with the same delight as a juvenile delinquent might wield his first Stanley knife, i.e. with **PRIDE**.

Crops come in 1, 2, 3 and 4's, and are much easier to look after for those who couldn't care less about their hair. The

crossover inevitably comes when the sixties flatties go MOD-ern and a whisper of a fringe plays dead and lies limp across the brow.

There are no longer fixed rules in dressing up. No dress codes. Fashionables love pastiches with a passion. Passions however are not something Skinheads are supposed to deal in, unless they involve twenty-two men and one ball, or answer to the name of Heather or Julie. But it's no longer a question of what team you support

(football), but whether you have the spirit (spunk) to team up at all with this new breed.

Example: An acquaintance recently returned crestfallen from an outing to Paris after spending the entire weekend sentenced to the solitary confinement of his hotel room. The reason for this self-imposed imprisonment being that no Parisian club doorman would allow him entry into their nighteries. No matter how much he squealed, his **BIG** boots, braces, and No. 1 crop could not be construed as fashionable, but simply fathomless and furiously despicable. A man in an iron mask indeed, or at the very least a steel toe cap.

CHRIS wears dogtooth suit, shirt, and hanky all available from Cavern (susie b fashions ltd) 22 fouberts place london w1 alterations free of charge in five minutes, union jack socks from willesden high street, Dr. Marten boots from Holts hockney es.

fully become a suedehead.that was wrong. more difficult contain his urge to bash
He had played at being one frilly
irts, bowler, umbrella
had all been trade-
marks because he
ing about making
Mayfair his happy
ground.No amount of
of frills or environmental
change could take away his
East End-ness. Maybe he
lost some of his native
batter, his 'accent'. That
n't give a damn. Inside
where he lived he was
oe Hawkins, son of a
locker, bigot de luxe
Aggro was his cho
Putting the boot
in his excitement
The runt had
brought this about.
bleedin' fool he'd been letting
the trendy bastard in on the
robbery. Jeeze, how he wish
at his old mob had stuck
to him. They'd have pull
he job easily - without
shooters or getting
a fuzz killed.
The copper was
dead and the
entikit picture
ashed on telly
ry newspaper
arried the story.
That he was sure of even if people de
recalled how the mob had followe
his orders and gone on Pakki-bash
sprees every so often. How they ha
hippies and Hell's Angels bend a
to their superiority.He remember
times when they had smashed a
carriage or terrorised bus passer
West Ham away match. Especially,
he recalled the Chelsea games and
bastards at The Shed - the C
What was it they called thems
now? Boot Boys?
First there was skinhead.
Then came suedehead.
Now it was Boot Boys...

or two...

This reaction IS understandable. It IS threatening (it's meant to be!). It is a little scary that so many fashionable faïres should suddenly decide to pounce around with such delight in so many obviously fascistic fashions, but that in itself has to be a sign of the times. **WELL HARD!**

But the clothes themselves have changed little. The Skin has always looked smart and clean, however desperate the image may appear. The restricted suits (the bad cut being all part of the tight-lipped tight-assed manly stance) in tonic or dogstooth, the classic button-down collar shirts, the exposed ankle, the Dr. Marten shoe or

BOOT, the Crombie overcoat, or donkey jacket, the braces. These are all supposed symbols of shame, and yet are being worn with a renewed enthusiasm and fervour by these new colourful terrace-ists. The look is whistle clean, yet **TOUGH**.

Kids no longer survive on promises. **MAKE IT HAPPEN** is the new chant to be heard. And heard it will be when the next collections meet head on in October. Katharine Hamnett (a well worn fashion barometer) is supposedly, for all her well rehearsed anti-aggression arguments, piecing together a collection of pseudo-skins for us to slip into in spring 1986. Designers like Stephen Sprouse have

already given us the Nellie Queen Skinhead Girl Crombie overcoat in pink and Jean Paul Gaultier included a cropped version of the Harrington, as did Bernstock-Speirs and Richmond-Cornejo. And then there was Mark and Syrie. And then there was more...

It is rumoured that Jean Paul Gaultier was last seen leaving London's Heathrow Airport with arms full of 'Last Resort' shopping bags (the Skinhead shop which urges its customers to 'patronise the shop which patronises you'!!!!). All Karl Lagerfeld could manage was to smile and clutch his 'Hyper Hyper' carrier bags to his bugle-beaded bosom. Trompe L'Oeil?

BRACE YOURSELF!

S
T
Y
L
E

photographs by Richard Croft
make-up by Laetitia Rix
modelled by Chris Hall at z
& Julie from lower clapton.
Julie's haircut at Arthur Graham, Lower Clapton
shot at Lipstick Studios

JULIE wears Fred Perry shirt from Blazer long acre london w1, braces from shepherds bush market, badge from Cavern.





Newest words in the fashion vocabulary...

CLEAN & TOUGH

What better description fits DENIM. CUSTOMISING is the updated way of saying cheap and cheerful, but has long since been the province of the heavy metal STUD, and/or cutting BITCH. Newest way is to create rather than destroy (post punk attitude). New breed of religiously fanatical fashion fans who all saw WITNESS – 'AMISH BOWLS THEM OVER AT HARPERS' – are paring down their wardrobe. Only one or two designer names remain. A plagiarised version of THE Richmond-Cornejo cropped jacket is simply what happens when the back seam of your jeans comes apart...A lengthy BodyMap skirt is all a question of triangles and inside legs...and THAT coat...With a little American BodyMap (another word for artistic) licence, that coat is achieved by stitching up two pairs of jeans and letting the jacket take the strain...It all looks CLEAN, and it is TOUGH. Even so, after all that talk of being cheaper to make your own versions, when all is said and done it is probably as cheap, and far less strenuous to go into some store in South Molton Street and buy an original (sic!). Darned Jeanius!

●
photographs by Peter Brown
hair and make-up by Louise Constad
modelled by Martine at marco rasala
& Simon Ringrose at z
many thanks to Lindah Kiddey
& Wrangler for all the denims





I guess it had to happen...**LE BACKLASH!** Not content with blitzing us with pages full of their bland taste in frocks (Not EVERYONE wants to look like Princess Diana!), those great

BEHOLDERS OF BEAUTY ?

●
SCARLETT

wears Hermes headscarves
available from Hermes 155 new bond st london w1
& 3 royal exchange ec3



dames of the dailies are trying to put the mockers on our favourite models too. It seems that 'The Little Sisters of Blandness' of the Convent of Grace and Beauty (Fleet Street Order)

●
SCARLETT

wears Bilah Greenburg wool suit & blouse,

jewellery by Chiepo Chiepo

Bilah Greenburg to order (482 0716)

Chiepo Chiepo oxford walk oxford st london w1.



are trying to drive out such rare beauties as Amanda Cazalet, Scarlett, Mimi, et al. "J'accuse!", they cry as they point the finger and bad mouth the girls, and boys, of owning **HOOKED**

●
CLAUDIA BRUCKEN

wears No? Yes! velveteen dress
available from No? Yes! 38 floral st london wc2
and Joseph south molton st wl, Mango 19 st leonards
rd windsor, Blam Blam 29 walcot st bath, Geep
Clothing 1139 pollockshaws rd showlands glasgow



NOSES, HEAVY JAWS, and UGLY FACES (sounds like some kind of WITCH hunt to me). "Where have all the pretty ones gone?!", they squeak...The answer being, NOWHERE

●
CLAUDIA BRUCKEN

wears Soup fake fur coat & belt (worn as hat),
spot gloves from 20th Century Box, fabric from
The Cloth Shop

Soup available from Acrobat 31 kings rd london sw3



MAANNNN! Features may be easily confused, but the fact remains that to deny these lovelies their **NATURAL** beauty is to deny everyone the chance to look themselves squarely in

●
BARRY KAMEN

wears Jasper Conran beat sweater, Jean-Paul Gaultier
backless vest, Norma Kamali knickers
*Jasper Conran available from Browns 23-27 south molton
st london w1, Jean-Paul Gaultier from Bazaar 4 south
molton st w1, Norma Kamali from Browns.*



the mirror, and smile. Instead of hiding away they swan around as others swoon. Some travesty of nature may have mothered these **BEAUTIFUL FREAKS**, but nothing can take their

●
BARRY KAMEN

wears found dungarees, Kenzo boiler suit and
Stephen Linard rubber suit
*available from Beyond Stephen Linard at Bazaar 4 south
molton st london w1.*



looks away from them. For our sake. No longer do people want to aspire to some unobtainable fake face, but wish instead to see accessible images. **I WANNA BE ME, DON'T**

●
AMANDA CAZALET

wears full circle skirt & pants by Soup
available from Acrobat 31 kings rd london sw3



WANNA BE YOU! Just walk a mile in Amanda's shoes...

●
CHRIS HALL

wears carpet coat & trousers by Mark and Syrie

AMANDA CAZALET

wears lounge pants & nightie by Mark and Syrie

available from Browns 23-27 south molton st london w1,
Liberty regent st w1, Flex trocadero shaftesbury ave w1,
Lascelles carnaby st w1

photographs by David Hiscock
hair and make-up by William Falkner at pin up
(amanda, barry & scarlett)
and Jeanette Rivera at creative workforce
(claudia)
modelled by Amanda Cazalet at marco rasala,
Barry Kamen at larraine ashton, Claudia
Bruckner from propaganda & Scarlett.

X

Patsy Kensit is seventeen, beautiful and wants to be famous. At the age of five she was Patsy Peapod for *Birds Eye*, soon she's going to be Crepe Suzette in Julian Temple's film of *Absolute Beginners*. For now she's singer in Eighth Wonder, an unashamedly commercial pop group of significant worth. How can you resist?

EIGHTH WONDER

We're sitting in London's Kettners, me, Patsy and her brother Jamie, guitarist in Eighth Wonder. She's wearing something the size of a tea-towel and telling me about her convent days.

"I was brought up on chant music so there's a lot of that influence in the group, but I like lots of other stuff from Eurythmics to The Power Station. My favourite group is Duran Duran."

It sometimes seems like a different world, talking to someone who's too young to remember Blondie, and whose idea of old age is disconcerting to oldsters such as me.

A

"There's an awful lot of groups now who are getting on a bit – in their mid-twenties – and there's a whole set of young groups like us who are about to take over. I think that people are getting ready to laugh at the old stars and preparing to brush them aside."

"Being so young, and being a girl, it's been really difficult to make people in the industry, like producers, take any notice of what I want, or what I say. Sometimes they treat me like I'm an idiot or something."

Patsy holds no truck with old muso standards, liking the group's most recent recording studio because "it's not dark, depressing and smelly like all the other ones we've been in. Horrible."

The fruits of their labour should sprout forth with a four or five track debut EP and a couple of songs on the soundtrack of the aforementioned *Absolute Beginners*. Other contributions are expected from the likes of Animal Nightlife, Sade, Paul Weller, Elvis Costello and David Bowie.

Patsy gained the lead role of Crepe Suzette opposite Eddie O'Connell's Colin, after initially being rejected.

"I tried when I was sixteen, but they said I looked too young, then they came along to see the group play, not realising who I was, and liked what they saw so they offered me the part."

Patsy's career started early, again by accident.

R

"My mother ran a casting agency and was short of children for an audition, so she sent me along to make up the numbers. I ended up getting the part – Mia Farrow's daughter in *The Great Gatsby*. It's never been a glamorous, showbizzy family though. I mean, I went to a convent and everything."

Nevertheless the acting continued, and the *Absolute Beginners* part comes as no great surprise. We hear plenty of rumours about the film and few facts. What exactly IS happening? Is it really being moulded for the American market?

"MTV are plugging it 24 hours a day, so I suppose they're expecting a lot from it. It's Julian's life at the moment, he's putting so much into it, he's incredible. They've changed the plot, I mean Suzette is a real stonker in the book, spending all her time after all the black men. When her and Colin finally make love in the film it's a far more moving experience."

"The club scenes in the film are best, it's just like down *The Wag* or something. It was so much fun to film although most of the London clubbers had an awful problem in getting up at 6.30 in the morning to start filming. Most of them are only just coming home then!"

There's confidence bordering on cockiness permeating everything that Patsy says or does, but it may well be justified.

"We had loads of names for the group, most of them absolutely naff. We chose Eighth Wonder because it sounds so arrogant. I think you need to be a little bit arrogant."

Patsy's hero is Gary Crowley: she's got a photo of him on her diary. Her favourite night out is the Junior Best Disco In Town.

Eighth Wonder are ready to blow away the crumblies.

● interview by Paul Mathur photograph by Richard Croft

● make-up by William Falkner hair by James Lebon/cuts assisted by Jo Jelle shot at Lipstick Studios





X

"I was just pleased to get out of the war in that place – and Glasgow's a great city." That place was 'Rhodesia', which Zeke Manyika left six years before independence, in 1974. "I could walk around the streets, talk to who I liked. I just enjoyed it so much I had no desire to go back", he says, in a voice or accent that's quite analogous to the music of his group, Dr. Love: English, with African emphases and Scottish inflexions in equal measure. To push a comparison a bit further, initial acquaintance with man and music leaves one with similar impressions: easy energy, affability; but very *robust* – capable of more, one suspects.

Zeke, of course, was until recently the drummer with the fitfully marvellous Orange Juice. Postcard – the magical! the mythical! – had an office around a corner from a basement rehearsal studio patronised by Zeke, through the pavement-level window of which the feet of pausing passers-by were visible. One pair were attached to Edwyn Collins. The rest is subject to litigation. (Collins is currently suing Polydor over the issue of a compilation LP.) Collins and Manyika remain the best of friends, however. "I can talk and laugh and talk and laugh with Edwyn for hours."

At the time of their first meeting Zeke was dividing his time, increasingly unequally, between a Social Studies course (uncompleted) at University, and his band, a prototype Dr. Love – "It was early days and all the separate bits were a bit obvious." The conflicting lures of the musical and the academic had troubled him since childhood. Or troubled his parents at any rate, both of whom are teachers, and wished Ezekiel to be likewise. Particularly his father, who, being a singer in his youth,

A

ZEKE MANYIKA

had sampled the unstable nature of the calling for himself.

At the moment it's busy, busy, busy. Music, music, music. he has a Portastudio – currently on loan to The High Bees – in his rented west London flat, and the weekend before I met him he'd DJ'd at an Ethiopian benefit before going on to Womad, as player and enthusiastic spectator. And there's a new LP, tour, promotion and so on. Unexpected visitors too, probably, since he's the sort of person who receives demo tapes from people he gives his address to backstage: "Come up and see me when you're in London, that sort of thing. When I've had too much to drink. Oh boy." (Laughs, head in hand.) And they do. He's good about it, all the same, and says they are too, although he shares a flat with a Some Bizzare person and reckons he's a bit worried he'll have some of Marc Almond's 'Gutterhearts' camping out on his doorstep. I bet he'd invite them in for tea if they did, though.

●interview by Mark Cordery photograph by Mark Bayley



R

The word has been getting around. Slowly. The incredible richness of Brazilian music has been starting to seep through to the more progressive radio programmes here. Charlie Gillett and Gary Crowley in particular have been picking up on the extraordinary variety of music that's come out of Brazil in the last decade. The ability of Brazilian musicians to assimilate rock, funk and

reggae into traditional regional styles has led to the development of a unique musical culture. It is less well known here than it should be only because of musical conservatism and resistance to non-English language music in Britain and the States.

In Europe the situation is different. The big Brazilian names are well established there, and when Gilberto Gil came to

play in London recently it was after a six week European tour and eight concerts in France alone.

Gil has an affinity with London. Exiled by the military government in 1970, he lived here for three years, and his son Pedro was born here. The concert proved that much has happened to Brazilian music since Jobim and the era of Bossa Nova. Delicious rock-samba rhythms segued into reggae and rock tunes, all played with great dexterity and superb musicianship by a band who could mix raw power with rare delicacy when Gil slowed things down to play some bossa-influenced songs on acoustic guitar.

"What's exciting about Brazilian music", Gil tells me later, "is the mixture

of cultures. We are all cultural cannibals. I eat you and you eat me. When you eat me, you may take a little poison, but you also take something good. Marx said there would be eventually no national cultures, just an international culture with artists taking different things from different cultures."

In his next album Gil intends to continue with this internationalism by including an Italian song played to a reggae beat and a song about racism in France. Following the success of his concert and the increased interest from his record company he hopes to come back next year. It should be a concert worth looking forward to.

David Kay



T



Fun is to be gleaned from the unlikeliest of places these days, one such source being Brussels, home of Crepuscule Records. For years they have built a solid reputation for releasing the most variable product unleashed on the poor consumer.

Among the best have been the records put out by Anna Domino, an at times frustratingly low-key name behind a noise. Her first LP, *East and West* showed lots of promise and wiped the floor with



most of its contemporaries, whilst the new *Rythm* (sic) EP is nothing short of smashing.

The songs include *Take That* ("Just about the only song I've ever written with a strict dum-dum beat. You can dance to it.") and *My Man* ("More of a jazz influence. The sort of song where the melody carries the rhythm.")

"I don't really consider myself a singer," Anna insists over a crackly phone line from Belgium. "At the moment I'm really just a composer, although I'm beginning to realise that perhaps I should learn to sing, since that's what the listener is probably most immediately interested in."

"The songs aren't really songs as such since they haven't got beginnings, middles and ends. I play around with progressions and sequences but in the end the songs are just like slices of something."

Before the pips went I asked Anna what strange artistic impulse had led her to spell *Rhythm* incorrectly.

"Well that was inspired basically by the fact that I forgot how to spell it!"

Paul Mathur

existence by working as a journalist!"

At the moment, there are unfortunately no plans for Krupps to bring their hypnotic blend of metal and pop to Britain again to play live — "but we'd love to do a concert with an orchestra playing our anthems," exclaims Jurgen.

"Oh, I can well imagine it," agrees Cristina. "That's our dream, our ideal, to have fanfares blaring out. All we need is a rich record company to finance it!"

Johnny Waller

"He has the potential to become The singer" says Bluey of Stephen, 18, who looks down at his shoes and smiles. I smile at Bluey. I know what he means. One listen to the 45 *So Long* by Dante is enough to hear a voice, already remarkable, of quite serious potential.

The pair of them have just recorded nearly an LP's worth of material with two-thirds of Luther Vandross' Production team, Marcus Miller and Ray Bardani, and their feeling that they more than held their own doesn't surprise me. While I suspect that the "passion play" of a record that Bluey promises may be a touch overwrought in places — Stephen has an evident taste for the bravura performance — it will certainly have its moments.

A few years back, however, when Jean-Paul Maunick, AKA Bluey, first despatched young Stephen Barrington from his door with the suggestion that he take some singing lessons, he thought he'd seen the last of him.

"I've said that to a lot of guys in my time," laughs the former *Light Of The World* and *Incognito* guitarist. "The kid looked sharp, but I'd heard it a million times before — although I listened to his tape again, and there was something there that was a little bit more."

Moreover, against all odds, the kid persevered with the vocal training for 18 months with Hackney's answer to Tona de Brett, Colin Forrest, who was sufficiently impressed to give free lessons when the youth couldn't come across with the reedies. Young Stephen had some involvement with the local reggae runnings but used to listen to all kinds of things on the radio at home, much to the chagrin of his elder brother, who took him to task for disloyalty to the funk: "Put that back on *Horizon*!" he recalls as being an oft-heard refrain. But Stephen wanted to hear Alison Moyet. Perhaps these musical differences are somewhere at the root of a voice that, whilst identifiably black, is decidedly sui generis.

Meanwhile, temporarily retired from a stagnating Brit-funk scene, Bluey "was trying to write songs that had a chance of getting on the radio. Trying to write songs without saying, 'Has this got a groove for The Club?'" He'd secured a singles deal when Stephen turned up on his doorstep again. This time Bluey was unconditionally mad about the boy, even more so when the demo Stephen voiced for him instantly upped the ante to an albums deal. "So I quickly got my butt in the background," says Bluey, laughing again. "Thank God he's landed up in my lap. And I shall keep him there. It's a real pennies from heaven situation with my son here. Heh heh." Somehow I don't think he's going to be sorry for laughing.

Mark Cordero



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Jurgen and Cristina from the fiercely invigorating German group Krupps are explaining to me why they don't sound like Kraftwerk.

"I think our music sounds Teutonic, but it's got an international aspect to it. We've written a lot of hymns — not just wishy-washy pop music. Ach, schwer zu erklaren!"

Pardon!

"We know exactly what we mean in German — it's so difficult to explain in English!"

Hymns? In English, that means religious music. Christina: "That's not what we mean — I think the word we're looking for is anthems. Loud bombastic music!"

But anthems for whom?

Jurgen: "For everyone!"

Christina: "When you look at it, everybody — every human being — is fighting for their lives or their existence in some way every day."

"The gladiator is someone whose job it was to actually fight for his life, so we chose him as a symbol for everybody who is living and fighting for their existence. You need money to live to survive. Even you — you're fighting for your

X

In the early months of this year some of those people in major record companies were getting pretty worried, so they said, about the imminent demise of the independent label set-up. Because they-who-wear-

COLOURBOX

kickers no longer see the indies as a threat. They see it as "an essential part of a healthy business." As Creation Records devil Alan McGee recently put it, the majors see the small labels as an A & R bargain basement. These ramshackle set-ups still nurture talent.

Which brings us in a round-about way to Colourbox, a group whose talents are as yet constitutionally unfit for a major label. That much they admit themselves. After their first single *Breakdown* they did get a few premature offers, but wisely turned them down. As Martyn Young, Colourbox's self-elected dictator, says, "The thought of signing to a major didn't bloody appeal. Besides, if we'd been on a major we'd have only been thrown off – we'd have had to have a hit by now."

And another thing they would'nt have stood for: Colourbox can't even play live yet.

"This all came about," Martyn recounts, "when some bloke stupidly left his synthesizer round at our flat on a permanent basis, so we started playing about with it. We'd always played the guitar before that . . ."

'We' is Martyn and his younger brother Steven, who both sport identical peroxide flat-top haircuts and who make a scruffy contrast to singer Lorita Grahame who's positively secretarial in comparison. They're both unemployed; she works in an unemployment centre. She has a distinguished past as the singer of the reggae single *Young, Free and Single*; they have an undistinguished past playing in punk bands who've released singles they'd rather not mention.

It's an odd match, but it's turned out rather well. And after a year's gap after their wonderful *Punch and Say You* singles they've finally got around to releasing the magnificent *The Moon Is Blue*, a grandiose ballad full of pounding triplets behind a yearning vocal born out of long hours spent listening to Burt Bacharach.

Next up, the LP *Colourbox*, a base of synthesizers vitalized through clever arrangements which romp through a variety of reggae/soul/electro/funk styles.

"Yeah," says Martyn off-handedly, "we nick all over the place."

And after three years as Colourbox, have you got any idea of how you're going to play live yet?

"Well, we keep getting different ideas," says Steven.

"And we just haven't got round to making a decision about how to do it," adds Martyn.

Don't be put off by their show of incompetence. Colourbox are the cleverest pop group to emerge in years.

●interview by William Shaw

●photograph by Julian Simmonds



A

R

T



If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then Toronto must be the most complimentary city in North America. It's currently suffering from an epidemic of lookalike bands who make a very healthy living out of unashamedly imitating established acts on the local club and concert circuit. Some of the better clones even find their success spreading south into the States — according to Dave Kirby, the agent who handles most of Canada's clones, last year in Boston Rolling Stones lookalikes The Blushing Brides even managed to outsell Pat Benatar, a lady with a huge US following.

It's not just the old favourites like the Rolling Stones who find themselves imitated: among the other bands on the circuit are clones of Bruce Springsteen (The River Street Band), Van Halen (Panama), Billy Idol (Idol Threat), The Police (The Secret Police), Pink Floyd (Clearlight), and no less than three ZZ Top imitators, Tres Hombres, Eliminator and The Ozone Rangers. Tres Hombres have found themselves to be perhaps the most successful, and certainly the best appreciated of the clones — ZZ Top's record company in Canada have asked them to play at the release party for the new ZZ Top album, and there is even talk that Tres Hombres will be booked to play support band on the next ZZ Top tour. A dangerous move indeed — what happens if Tres Hombres get a better response than ZZ Top themselves? Will ZZ Top be accused of being Tres Hombres clones? *Tam Eliot*



You're probably getting terrifically bored by my recommendation to you of countless post-Postcard combos. Tough, here's another.

The High Bees are Aztec Camera's Malcolm Ross and Dave Ruffy (who used to be a Rut), joined by Malcolm's wife Syuzen Buckley, best remembered for her guesting on Josef K's rendition of Applebush and for live appearances with Orange Juice.

Such a hurdy-gurdy mixture of incestuous talent, but these are more than mere jangly guitar folk. Their debut single on the sterling Supreme International label was called *Some Indulgence* and proved to be a quirky pop shimmy behind a lush, lazy vocal performance by Syuzen. The sound of the newer songs, including one set for September release, maintains the sprightly feel, using horns intelligently to add flesh to the (hip) bones.

"It's just a venture running alongside Aztec Camera," says Malcolm, "although it's more than only a hobby. Roddy is spending time writing, and he knows that we're not just his backing band, so he's quite in favour of us working on our own like this."

The name is inspired by Hibernian Football Club and proves to you out there that these people are not a bunch of jessies, although hopefully The High Bees pop sound will garner a great deal more success than their fairly limp soccer inspiration. A verdict? Well, Brian, it just came over and I sort of stuck my head in the way....*Paul Mathur*

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